

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 281.—VOL. XI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 26, 1868.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.



[COUNT LECHELLE'S DEMAND.]

LADY ROSLYN'S MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LORD ROSLYN was much embarrassed how to communicate to Mrs. Dasham his fears of the unpleasant surmises that might be likely to arise should her presence in his house be suddenly discovered. The deserted wife was sitting in an attitude of deep despondency, lost in thought, and apparently unconscious of his presence.

"Mrs. Dasham," said Earl Roslyn, seating himself by her side, "I am distressed to know how to provide for your immediate accommodation without arousing the gossip of servants and the comments of the idle. I am in perplexity on your account; cannot your woman's wit discover some means by which I may order an apartment to be provided for you to rest in, during the remainder of the night, without exciting ill-natured curiosity?"

"Sir," exclaimed the young woman, hastily starting to her feet, "I would not for worlds trespass upon the bounty of the Earl of Roslyn unknown to him. Let me go out; you have fed me and listened to me with sympathy, now permit me to leave you with thanks and with gratitude."

"Not so," exclaimed the earl hastily. Then he murmured to himself, "There is Vayle Malvern, who is always ready to give counsel in complicated affairs of this delicate nature. I will seek him and ask his advice. Remain here, Mrs. Dasham," said Lord Roslyn, aloud to the young woman, "I will go and consult my friend." Then the earl went slowly from the room and thoughtfully up the staircase. "Vayle Malvern only arrived from Roslyn Manor this afternoon," said Lord Roslyn to himself, "and it seems scarcely courteous to rouse him; nevertheless, he is very good, and he will pity this unfortunate young creature." Then the earl found his way to the chamber of Vayle Malvern and knocked softly at the door.

He was immediately invited to enter, and upon accepting the invitation Lord Roslyn was slightly

astonished to find Malvern sitting dressed before a table, apparently occupied in putting the finishing touches to a water-colour drawing.

"What, Roslyn!" exclaimed Malvern, in a tone of apparently supreme astonishment, "what brings you here at this time of the night; are you unable to sleep? Pray be seated and tell me what is the matter?"

The Earl of Roslyn seated himself on a velvet chair, as invited by his crafty kinsman, and then, without the least hesitation, he related the story of the starving woman, whose cries of misery had attracted him in the street below while he leaned over the balcony. He confessed to a Quixotic interest in the forlorn creature, and he added that her romantic story, of which he gave a slight sketch to Vayle Malvern, had excited his compassion still more deeply.

"In fact," added the earl, "I am quite resolved to try and discover the worthless adventurer who has blighted her life; meanwhile, I wish to provide in some respectable manner for the support of Mrs. Dasham. Can you devise any method by means of which the poor creature may be put into a comfortable manner of living, without exciting any ill-natured curiosity, or impertinent surmises. You comprehend me?" Then, after a pause, the earl added, "Lady Roslyn will perhaps assist us in arranging something for the benefit of this unfortunate young person."

Vayle Malvern interrupted the earl with a gesture expressive of horrified surprise.

"Lady Roslyn," repeated the schemer in a tone of exaggerated astonishment. "Surely, my dear Roslyn, you are mad."

"Mad," returned Lord Roslyn, in a vexed voice, "not that I am aware of. What tokens of insanity have I manifested? Is not Lady Roslyn always most ready and anxious to further any plans for the emancipation of the wretched, and the relief of the miserable? Perhaps you will be so very kind as to explain yourself, Mr. Malvern."

"Nay, now I have offended my best friend, my patron, my generous unwearying benefactor," said Vayle Malvern, apostrophizing the painted ceiling of

his elegant chamber, and crossing his arms on his chest. Then, looking down gloomily at the rich carpet the actor added:

"If I lose your friendship, Lord Roslyn, I shall be the most miserable man on this earth's surface; but you ought to know, you should be aware, that I am actuated by no other motive than a, perhaps, too vehement desire for your welfare," and then Vayle Malvern sighed deeply, wiping his eyes meanwhile with an embroidered handkerchief.

"Tell me, then, my dear Malvern, why you should be so fearfully afraid of my consulting Lady Roslyn with regard to this poor woman."

"Because Lady Roslyn is a very exacting, suspicious wife; she is not, alas! attached to you, but she is most punctilious with regard to the attentions you pay her, most incensed at the least temporary homage which you render to another woman. Nay, do not flatter yourself with vain hopes of exciting anything like affection in that marble breast," for a happier light shone for an instant in the earl's dark eyes.

"The countess has not a particle of regard for you, but she is as jealous of your allegiance as a tyrannical monarch is jealous of the submissive obedience of his vassal. Were you to inform Lady Roslyn of the history of the unfortunate Mrs. Dasham, she would attribute your kindness to the very worst motives; and if, as I am inclined sometimes to think, she cherishes the idea that it may, at some future time, be possible to sue you for a divorce, she will lay hold of this circumstance, and twist it into any shape that may serve her purpose."

"Great heaven, Malvern!" said the earl, putting his hand to his head as though the words of his kinsman had actually stunned him. "You cannot mean seriously that Adine, my wife, whom I love, whom—whom I adore," the young nobleman continued, speaking now tempestuously, "and giving the reins to his passionate feelings,—you cannot think that the being for whom I would lay down my life—ten thousand lives if I had them—would willingly rid herself of me in the cruel manner you speak of."

Lord Roslyn arose and paced the room in the heat of his excitement.

Vayle Malvern watched him with a dark and covert scowl.

"This game grows dangerous," muttered he. "These idiots are falling headlong in love with each other, in spite of my diplomatic skill. Ah, it will require all the acumen and all the intriguing genius of a Talleyrand to circumvent them!"

Lord Roslyn came and stood in front of his cousin.

"You tell me then that Adine detests me," he asked, in a choked voice.

"I am much grieved, deeply pained, to be compelled to admit that such is the case, Lord Roslyn, but you ask me for the truth, and I have no other alternative with my friend and kinsman, than to tell him what I conceive to be the undoubted fact."

Lord Roslyn was white as death, and nearly any other man would have had compassion on his sufferings.

Vayle Malvern knew neither pity nor compunction. Looking steadily on the anguished face of his kinsman, he continued:

"There is no occasion, not the least, for you to tell your wife anything whatever about this object of your pity."

"I had forgotten her," said the earl, hastily; "tell me what you advise."

"Well!" said Vayle Malvern, slowly. "I have been turning the matter over in my mind. I should send her down to Roslyn in the capacity of seamstress. I heard the housekeeper regretting while we were in the country, that the young workwoman was to be married this month, and she did not know how to supply her place."

"But Lady Roslyn, not I should supply a workwoman," said Lord Roslyn. "What absurdity for me to interfere in such matters. I am anxious to discover the young woman's husband, and provide for her wants, but I cannot talk about sewing-machines, and the young nobleman fairly laughed outright."

"Leave the matter to me," said Malvern, in a grave tone of mock resignation. "I am equally anxious with yourself to further every work of charity, and my fortune is so much more humble than yours, that I have accustomed myself to undertake all manner of offices that would revolt the pride of my superiors. But, as I before said, leave the matter entirely to me, and I will go to Roslyn Manor, or, if it be not necessary, I will at least write to the housekeeper, and explain to her that this is an object for the most delicately administered kindness, suppressing your name altogether."

"It seems to me a pity that there should be all this mystery," said Lord Roslyn. "Only wish to be kind and charitable, and you seem to think it necessary that I should scheme and plot as though I were carrying on some wicked and secret conspiracy."

"Only mention the case to Lady Roslyn, and see how she will receive it," said Vayle Malvern, bitterly; "if I am not very much mistaken, she will threaten to leave your house at once."

He watched the effects of his cruel words on the earl's countenance; he saw the lower lip caught in a spasmodic convulsion, as it were, between the strong white teeth; Lord Roslyn bit his lip until the blood started.

"If she left me," said the earl, in a husky tone, "I fear I might run mad—I might do some desperate deed!"

"The sooner then, my dear lord, that she does leave you, the better for my purposes," said Vayle Malvern to his own heart. Then aloud to the earl: "Lord Roslyn, allow me, I entreat—I implore, to arrange this little matter for you without any questioning. It is but a little matter. Permit me to go down and speak to this person. I will give her money, and tell her to rest for the remainder of the night in the arm-chair, where you tell me you have left her. At daybreak I will steal downstairs, and let her out before the servants are stirring. I will direct her to the line of railway from whence she must start for Roslyn Manor, and I will give her a letter to the housekeeper which you must sign, just to show that I undertake this action of charity with your consent."

Vayle Malvern completely succeeded in talking the earl into his purpose. He went downstairs after writing a letter, which Lord Roslyn, who had now grown somewhat sleepy, signed without reading.

The earl and countess met at the breakfast-table the following morning with a cordial courtesy that was almost warmth.

Vayle Malvern watched them with restless eyes, and pondered over each word of their light converse with an anxious heart.

"Those two people love one another," argued the ambitious schemer to himself, "and the agency of love is so powerful, that unless I exert the utmost vigilance, I shall be very quickly foiled. A few more meetings, a few more droppings of those bright

eyes of the countess under her husband's ardent gaze, while the colour flickers on her pure cheeks, and her heart beats high beneath her graceful robe, and the secret will be betrayed. Be stirring, Vayle Malvern; the game you are playing for is a great one, and the stakes are high. Roslyn Manor and ninety thousand a-year may be yours, if you succeed in parting this nobleman from his young wife."

So he spoke to himself, and a scowl bent his eyebrows together, while a false smile played upon his lips.

When breakfast was over Lord Roslyn asked the countess what her plans were for the morning.

"I have formed none," answered Adine, with a vivid blush.

Earl Roslyn looked at his wife and sighed.

"He thinks of Mrs. Adrian," mused Adine, sorrowfully; "that woman is fortunate in having won the devoted love of so noble a heart. Ah, if I had known his worth, and he had been penniless, I would not have deserted him."

"Will you take a drive with me, Adine?" asked the earl.

At that moment Adine unhappily chanced to raise her eyes, and while doing so she encountered the fixed, imploring gaze of Vayle Malvern, who lingered long at the table, from which the earl and countess had risen. His looks plainly expressed the entreaty that Adine would refuse the earl the *little-thing* which he craved, and Malvern raised his hand with a gesture of warning which startled and confused Adine.

"I cannot drive with you this morning, Lord Roslyn," faltered the beautiful wife. "I have another engagement."

"I am sorry that my presence is so distasteful to you, Adine," said Lord Roslyn, in a sorrowful tone.

The gesture of Malvern had conveyed the impression to Adine that her husband only sought an interview with her in order to betray her; consequently she felt for the moment angered against him.

"It is only very lately that you have condescended to be solicitous about my predilections," said the countess, affecting to laugh, and attempting to simulate gaiety she did not feel. "I will drive with you another day, Lord Roslyn."

The earl was compelled to be satisfied with this promise, for Adine, hastily, begging to be excused, quitted the room.

"Her abhorrence of me increases," exclaimed the earl; "yet now and then I am inclined to think that she has some kind of regard for me, but the next moment she disappoints me with a flat refusal to accompany me either in a walk or drive. I could even imagine at times that something like jealousy of that detestable Mrs. Adrian was at the bottom of her capricious conduct. I will lose no time in letting her understand, that that selfish person has no hold whatever upon my heart."

"He is growing desperate, and I must indeed lose no time whatever," thought Vayle Malvern. "The countess may be jealous of your submission to her whims, Lord Roslyn," said Malvern, with a sarcastic smile, "but, oh, do not delude yourself with the notion that she has one atom of affection for yourself. I know—"

And here the schemer stopped suddenly short as if he had said too much. His words had the desired effect.

Lord Roslyn started.

"What do you know?" he asked.

"Pardon me. I dare not speak until my suspicions have received confirmation. Once before I ventured to talk of your lovely wife a little too frankly. As it is, I would rather not tell you anything until your own eyes are opened, and you can see things as they really are."

"You speak in enigmas, and there is a mystery about your words which I do not like, nay, which I detest. I am naturally fond of the light of heaven. I hate all underhand and subterranean methods of travelling towards one's object. If you know anything which you suspect regarding my wife, bring your suspicions to the daylight, and let us see if they will not disappear like ghosts at the rising of the sun. Come, tell me everything."

"Ah, Roslyn, you do not know what you ask," said Malvern, turning away his head, and speaking in a choked voice. "It is a misfortune for me that I feel the afflictions of others as though they were my own. May heaven help and pity you, my poor friend!"

The earl grew very pale, and his lip worked convulsively.

"You do, indeed, deal with mysteries," he said, at length, "but until I know a little more of them I shall not suffer myself to despair."

"Ask no more!" cried Malvern, rising in a hurry. "I cannot explain anything farther. May it please heaven to avert what I fear!" and then he quitted the room.

Perhaps he would not have been in such haste to

do so, anxious as he was to give force to his words by his gestures, had he known that Adine was returning to the room to search for her gold pencil, which she had left near her breakfast plate.

As Malvern left the room at one door Adine entered it at another.

The earl advanced to meet her with a trembling eagerness. He even ventured to clasp her hand. His pale face, sorrowful dark eyes, which looked almost tearful through the fire of love which burned in them, arrested Adine's attention, and stirred the tenderest depths of her heart.

"Adine," said Lord Roslyn, "how is it that you remain so cold to me? Can you not perceive that a change has taken place in my feelings?"

Adine looked down, and a lovely blush stole over her pure face and slender throat.

"Mrs. Adrian has left," she began.

"Adine," interrupted Lord Roslyn, impetuously, "you must get rid of all fancies connected with that woman. I have learnt her shallow worthlessness, and I despise where I once adored. Nay, if you doubt me, I can show you a little correspondence which passed between us lately; her letters in answer to mine will amply testify to my utter indifference, which, I will confess to you, (it were perhaps uncharitable to do so to any other), has grown into absolute contempt."

A glad expression of wonder took possession of Lady Roslyn. She was about to speak, when the door was opened, and Vayle Malvern walked into the room.

The sight of the wedded pair, hand-clapping, flushed, tremulous, love-glances shooting from the eyes of each, was like a cold dagger to the schemer's angry heart.

He made a gesture behind Lord Roslyn, which the countess saw; it was full of entreaty; it expressed abhorrent surprise at Lord Roslyn's tenderness, and then, beckoning Adine as though he were in desperate haste to communicate something to her, he quitted the room.

This action of Malvern's completely froze these wells of tenderness that had sprung up in Adine's heart. She believed that the earl was only seeking an occasion to betray her.

"I have not the least desire to pry into your correspondence, Lord Roslyn," she said, coldly and laughingly. "I suppose you would show me nothing that would shock my good taste or my sense of delicacy," and then, disengaging her hand from his clasping fingers, she glided from the room.

"Her caprice is something astounding," said Lord Roslyn to himself, in dismay, "one moment like a pitying angel, the next with all the pride and heartlessness of a finished belle. Which is her true character? or is she a mixture of both? She seems to delight in torturing me. Yes, I fear, as Malvern hints, that there is some mystery about my wife. Is there a more wretched man in London at this moment than myself?"

And the earl's dark face grew haggard and stern.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE preparations for the marriage of Alix Esle and Rellen Polack continued.

Rellen was the most generous of bridegrooms expectant. He sent Alix cases of expensive jewellery to choose from, regardless of cost.

The young girl turned over her various sets of emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and pearls, with an air of languid approbation, which pained and puzzled Lady Margaret Alden.

"Come cheer up, sweet little bride," said the lady, "you have not the exultant light in your dark eyes which I have been accustomed to see in the eyes of happy lovers. What, tears? Why, Alix, if this marriage is against your feelings it shall not proceed. No promise given hastily at the death-bed of a friend and extorted from your excited gratitude and sorrow, rather than from your judgment, should have power to bind you for life. Tell me all, Alix. Shall we, at least, beg a delay from Mr. Polack?"

"No, oh no!" sobbed Alix. "My feelings can never alter. I have promised Rellen; I have promised his mother. If I am not at present very happy, I should be still more wretched did I fall in the performance of what is absolutely my duty."

"But Mrs. Polack could not have understood the state of your feelings, while, as for Mr. Rellen Polack, he would be unworthy of the name of man and gentleman, did he attempt to hold you to an agreement which is against your nature and threatens to embitter your life."

"Oh, do not say so, Lady Margaret! I am not so averse to this marriage as you seem to imagine. You forget that I have loved Rellen from childhood; he has always been like a most affectionate brother to me."

"But it is not as a brother that you should regard him," replied Lady Margaret.

At this juncture a loud rapping sounded on the hall door, and almost immediately afterwards, Adine, Countess of Roslyn, was ushered into the presence of her aunt. The tall, graceful, golden-haired countess, dressed in rich blue silk, with diamonds flashing upon her arms, looked a being of another order in the eyes of Alix, whose secluded country life had presented to her no other types of feminine humanity than rosy farmers' daughters. When Adine had embraced her aunt, and conversed with her for a few moments, her eyes fell upon Alix. The beauty of the dark-eyed girl as she sat robed in white muslin, among her treasures of precious stones and Indian shawls, was something houri-like, or at least poetically eastern. She might have sat thus to a painter as a model for Lalla Rookh preparing for her bridal.

"Allow me to introduce my young friend, Alix Erle, to you, Adine," said Lady Margaret.

"Alix!" exclaimed the countess, starting and turning pale. For Adine immediately recalled the name engraved in the inside of the diamond bracelet. She regarded the beautiful girl more intently. "Can this be the girl who has held possession of my bracelet?" thought she, "and yet how could such an innocent-looking creature have even a remote connection with a man like the Count Lechelle; few are so unfortunate as I am!"

Alix came forward, bowed and smiled at the countess in a graceful, though timid manner, and then seated herself, at Lady Margaret's request, near to Adine, upon a couch.

"I wish you to become well acquainted," said the kindly lady, "there is much similarity in your tastes, your love of music, your choice of authors, and, lastly, in the native goodness of heart which characterizes you both."

"You flatter me at least, dear aunt," said the countess, with a sad smile.

Then she turned to Alix, and entered at once into conversation with her.

There was certainly a chord of sympathy between the two, for they discoursed without fatigue, or any difficulty in keeping up the discussion; they each spoke warmly and with interest, and they discovered, as Lady Margaret had surmised, that there was much similarity in their tastes, and perhaps even in their characters, allowing for the different circumstances of their early surroundings.

While they were talking, Alix raised her arm suddenly, in imitation of some gesture she had seen enacted on the stage; the wide sleeve of her dress fell back, and Lady Roslyn perceived the fac-simile of that diamond bracelet, her husband's gift, glittering upon the white slender wrist of Alix.

She was so amazed at this coincidence, which incontrovertibly associated Alix with the Count Lechelle, that an unguarded exclamation of surprise broke from her lips.

"That bracelet," said Lady Roslyn. "I have once exactly like it: how extraordinary, for the pattern is a most uncommon one."

"It is very remarkable," assented Alix, with a frankness that puzzled the countess, "for I had another bracelet of the same pattern, given to me some weeks since, and my friend came to me, and asked for it again, as he had given it to me in mistake, and then afterwards he had this one made for me instead; they are precisely alike, only that I had scratched my name inside the other with a very fine stiletto, and I hope the real owner of the bracelet will not object to that!"

Lady Roslyn had grown still paler, while Alix had been making these frank disclosures.

"Your friend is a generous one," she said, with a slight laugh, which she strove to render careless. Alix blushed, and her voice faltered:

"Yes, Mr. Polack is very generous," she said.

"Your guardian?" asked Adine.

"Yes, my guardian, my friend, and I have always regarded him as my brother!"

"Is his name Polack?" asked Lady Roslyn.

"Yes, Rellen Polack, the son of the lady who brought me up. I have known him ever since I can remember anything at all," said Alix, looking frankly into the eager face of the countess.

There was such high-souled integrity in the clear, dark eyes of Alix, that Lady Roslyn found it impossible to doubt her, but the mystery seemed to grow darker, and more intricate.

"I must find out whether or no she is acquainted with Lechelle," thought Adine.

An opportunity soon presented itself. While talking of songs, Alix mentioned a gondolier love-song with a very pretty chorus, and she asked Lady Roslyn if she had ever heard it.

"Yes," replied Adine. "I have sung it myself as a duet, and the person who joined me in the song was a very talented man called the Count Lechelle."

Adine looked anxiously at Alix, but there was not a trace of emotion on her face at the mention of that

name, which conveyed such terror to the heart of the Countess of Roslyn.

"I have never heard that name," said Alix.

Before the countess rose to take leave she had quite fascinated the fancy and won over the heart of Alix Erle. As Hubert's sister she would have been highly interesting, even without her natural charm of manner and extraordinary loveliness; but when to these were added the warm kindness of her words, the gentle goodness of her looks, and the indescribable sympathy which drew Alix towards her, the conquest was complete.

On her part Lady Roslyn was as much charmed as puzzled by the whole bearing of Alix Erle.

"She cannot be in any way connected with the infamous man who holds my most unhappy secret," mused Lady Roslyn, while she was driving through the park in her carriage. "And yet how can this Mr. Polack have become possessed of my bracelet? I should like to see him. Yet I ought not to show myself to anybody connected with that dreadful man."

While the countess thus mused, she perceived no less a personage than the Count Lechelle leaning over the railings of the park.

He raised his hat to her and made a very deep obeisance, but the unhappy Adine felt that the adventurer was only mocking her with that false show of courteous humility.

The audacious count was not contented with the slight hurried bow which Adine gave him in return. He hastened after her carriage, and signed to the coachman to stop the horses.

Adine was pale to the lips with fear, anger, and vexation, while Lechelle stood before her, carelessly twirling round a light cane which he carried.

"I have merely to ask your ladyship if you will be disengaged after nine o'clock this evening, and if I may hope to find you alone in the library. I have important news to communicate."

"Then do so in writing, Count Lechelle," replied Adine, faintly. "I cannot any longer submit to this constant persecution."

"Pardon me," interrupted Lechelle, bowing; "again I must insist on the meeting I ask for."

At this moment two gentlemen, splendidly mounted, galloped past the carriage.

Adine recognized, with a sinking heart, her husband and Vayle Malvern.

"Now I hope you are satisfied with the misery you have caused me!" whispered Adine, in a low tone. "My husband passed me as if I had been an utter stranger."

"Simply a slight matrimonial quarrel, which will blow over before to-morrow morning," returned Lechelle, "but you do not tell me where I may expect to meet you."

Adine paused a moment, then she said: "Call upon me this evening at the time you mention, and send up some name by which I may recognize you. I will see you in the library, but I will have no secret or clandestine meetings."

"As you please, fair lady," said Lechelle, raising his hat, and signing to the coachman to drive on.

"I am growing reckless now," murmured Lady Roslyn; "what can it avail to me though I keep my outward position as Countess of Roslyn, and even enjoy the smiles of the world and the homage of men, when my husband's heart is turned from me; when, as Vayle Malvern says, he only seeks for an excuse to rid himself of me, and when every kind look and word is but a snare laid to entrap me. I think I will give my husband a full account of the whole affair. And yet," and Adine shuddered, "how can I call him generous, when he is always laying traps for me, attempting to deceive me with false smiles and pretended kindness?"

Adine was so much overcome by her morning's adventure that she could not trust herself to be seen driving in the park any longer. She feared that her pale face and anxious eyes might occasion comment. She therefore gave the order to drive home.

That same evening, about half-past nine o'clock, she left Lord Roslyn, whose manner since the morning had been cold towards her, engaged with Vayle Malvern over the wine and desert; she sat down before her piano in the drawing-room, and amused herself by playing some portions of Beethoven's symphonies.

Her sad and perturbed soul seemed to find a soothing influence in the music.

She was calming herself by means of the concord of sweet sounds, when a footman entered and announced the arrival of the Reverend Mr. Watson, a gentleman whom the countess had promised to see that evening regarding the foundation of a new school for orphans.

For an instant Adine looked and felt puzzled; but she soon began to comprehend that this was only one of the many tricks and disguises of the eccentric Count Lechelle, who had thus sought an interview

with her, according to his announcement of the morning.

"I will see him," said Lady Roslyn, rising slowly, and walking towards the door. "Have you shown him into the library?"

"Yes, my lady, he asked to be shown there."

Adine went to the library, and there, before the table, stood the slight figure of a man in clerical costume; his hair, or rather wig, was iron gray, he wore a false beard of the same colour, and a large pair of spectacles. As soon as the door was closed this personage approached the countess, and burst into a low laugh.

"Is not my get-up complete, Adine? Now, I come to you in quite a new character. Were your husband himself to surprise us during our short *tête-à-tête*, he could never object to the presence of the Reverend Josiah Watson in his house."

"What is your business with me now?" asked Adine, coldly.

"The usual cry, the cry of the horseleech—give—give. Now it is a thousand pounds I want, for I have sundry expenses which will become exceedingly heavy next week, but if you will give me a thousand pounds I promise not to persecute you again for the space of a year."

"A thousand pounds," repeated Adine. "I have not a quarter of that sum by me."

"But your ladyship can write me a cheque?"

"My husband will know of it."

"And what of that, fair countess? It is to be a cheque drawn in favour of that most worthy man, the Reverend Josiah Watson, who is about to found a school for orphans. A subscription list, headed by the Countess of Roslyn, will be a complete mine of wealth to me," and Lechelle laughed gaily.

"Rather than lend myself to so wicked a scheme I would go to my husband and confess the terrible secret to him at once," said the countess, in a voice of anguish.

"Charming Adine, your husband has all the pride of his race. He will turn from you with intense loathing."

"I know it; but that is better than the life I lead under your most dreadful tyranny."

"Well, take your own course," said Lechelle, "but if you do not at once write me the cheque, I will go to the earl myself and betray you; you shall not have the advantage of telling your own story."

"Cruel, wicked man!" exclaimed Adine, in desperation, "leave my house at once. In my purse I have a note for one hundred pounds, which is all I will give you. I will head no subscription list, write no cheque."

Lechelle walked to the door.

"I shall find the earl perhaps more generous than the fair countess; he will be likely, I think, to pay for my silence. Ha! What is this, I hear footsteps."

"Go, go, I entreat you!" exclaimed Adine. "It is the earl coming to the library."

In another moment the handle of the door turned, and the earl, pale, stately, haughty, stood facing the countess and the adventurer.

"My lord, I have a secret to communicate to you," said the false clergyman; "are you prepared to stand a shock?"

Lady Roslyn had been standing during the time that the disguised man had been talking with her, but when he so boldly addressed her husband, her courage failed her, and she sank almost fainting upon a couch, dreading that the terrible secret was about to be laid bare before the eyes of Lord Roslyn.

The earl looked from his wife to the man in the clerical habiliments, and thence once more at Lady Roslyn, who sat pale and silent, motionless, and it seemed terror-stricken, upon the couch, waiting for the words that were to seal up her husband's heart against her for ever.

"My lord!" said Rellen Polack, "I am here to solicit the charitable aid of the Countess of Roslyn, on behalf of a family of young children, whose unnatural parents committed suicide last night, in the most terrible manner, leaving seven helpless babes without a rag to clothe them, or a crust to put into their mouths. The case has created a vast deal of sympathy, but, unfortunately, in our parish the sympathizers are not rich, and having heard everywhere of the wonderful philanthropy of your amiable countess, I have been emboldened to make an application to her, on the supposition that she would never turn away from any case of distress that came under her observation."

"I am convinced," said Lord Roslyn, speaking with an effort, for the recent communications of Vayle Malvern were weighing terribly upon his mind, "I am convinced that Lady Roslyn will feel happy to assist your *protégés* to the utmost of her ability, and so far as I am concerned, I shall be pleased to write you a cheque upon my bankers to the amount of one hundred pounds, and so to head the list of your subscribers."

During the whole of the time that Rellen Polack was recounting his tale of fictitious distress, and while the earl was making charitable inquiries and writing the cheque upon his bankers, Adine sat stunned and speechless before the two.

She understood that the false count was robbing her husband of one hundred pounds; she knew besides, that she would only enjoy a short respite from his pertinacity and persecutions, and she was almost awe-struck at the cool effrontery with which he stated his false case, and appealed to the generosity of the earl, as if he had an absolute right to make an application of the kind. "When will he go?" thought Adine, and she sat like one in a dream, listening to the unnatural discourse between the two men with whom her young life was bound up.

"How long can it last?" she asked herself wearily, "this sick fear, this dreadful suspicion on the part of Eustace—I wish I was out of it all, and at rest for ever."

Then she saw the false clergyman bow to her profoundly; the earl went with him himself into the hall. Presently he returned to the library, where Adine sat still speechless and scared upon the couch.

Lady Roslyn wore a robe of rich green satin, magnificently trimmed with white lace; rich plain gold ornaments encircled her throat and arms; she wore her fair hair dressed high behind, and it rippled on her snowy forehead in curls of a golden hue. Her beautiful face was no longer quite pale; a soft flush was glowing on her pure cheeks, her large sad eyes shone, and there sparkled in them the tears of grief or terror.

Lord Roslyn contemplated the exquisite beauty of his wife, and a glow of admiration thrilled through his being in spite of the stories he had been listening to over his wine with Vayle Malvern. He approached Adine, and took her hand into his own.

"Adine," he said, tremulously, "I passed your carriage in the park to-day. Did you not see me?"

"Ah, yes, Eustace," she answered, with a half-sigh, "and you would not, you did not speak—"

The bride broke off short, ashamed of the emotion she was manifesting towards this cold, unfeeling husband who had no love for her.

For a moment a look of hope and delight shone in the eyes of Lord Roslyn, but other thoughts seemed to restrain him from giving way to tender feelings.

"I did not speak to you, Adine, because you appeared to be occupied agreeably with some friend with whom I am not acquainted."

"Agreeably," echoed Adine, in a tone of hysterical excitement.

"And was the conversation not agreeable, Adine?" asked the earl gravely. "It seemed earnest enough on his part."

Adine was silent.

"I am betraying myself," she murmured in her own heart, "and Eustace will discover what a miserable creature he calls by the name of wife. It is not often that the light conversation of my ordinary passing acquaintances is vastly agreeable to me, Eustace," said Lady Roslyn, with a little forced laugh, "there is such sameness and monotony in discussing the topics of the day with commonplace people of fashion."

"And was your friend of this morning 'a commonplace person of fashion,' Adine?" inquired the earl, trying to smile, for Vayle Malvern had informed Lord Roslyn that the lounge in the park was the nocturnal visitor of his wife Adine. "I do not ever remember to have seen that personage at any of our friends' houses."

Adine hesitated, and then, seeing that detection was almost certain to follow upon deliberate falsehood, she resolved to tell her husband the truth, so far as she dared.

"That person, Eustace," she said, growing pale at the confession she was forcing herself to make, "that person is a certain Count Lechelle, whom I have been in the habit of meeting occasionally at the house of my guardian, Sir Horace Hawkade."

"Lechelle, Lechelle!" echoed Lord Roslyn; "I was in Italy surely at the time that the name you mention was creating a sort of sensation in fashionable circles. But was there not a something suspicious, if not absolutely vicious, about the man? Was he not proved to be, or at least condemned as, an adventurer, and even something worse? Adine, I am mortified beyond expression that the Count Lechelle should presume to renew his intimacy with you. Why, surely you were such a mere child at the time that the man could scarcely have taken much notice of you. How did he introduce himself again to you?"

Eustace Lord Roslyn had grown white with excitement and jealous anguish. Vayle Malvern had poisoned his mind against his lovely countess, had told him that he had a rival in the affections of Adine, but Vayle Malvern had not named the favoured lover of the lady, and so long as there was no name, there seemed nothing tangible to lay hold of.

The fears of the earl were great, but they had not taken a definite shape. His fancies had grouped themselves about Harold Bevan, some vague shadowy childish lover of Adine in her earliest teens. But the Count Lechelle, the libertine, worthless Count Lechelle, with whose name the town had rung some five years back, who had fled away in debt and disgrace, leaving behind him a reputation for wickedness and dishonour, such as stains, or at least taints, everybody who is connected with the culprit—this vile Count Lechelle to be the lover, the favoured lover of Adine, Countess of Roslyn! It was more than the earl could endure.

Lady Roslyn perceived that she had been too frank, and her heart sank within her.

Ah, if he knew all! If her husband only knew the truth concerning her, he would turn her then and there from his doors. So she feared and believed.

"Adine," continued Lord Roslyn, speaking sorrowfully, "what you tell me has given me such excessive pain, that I could almost wish, my wife, that you had put a knife instead to my heart."

"How intensely miserable I am," murmured the countess. "Oh, Eustace! Eustace!"

There was such a ring of passionate anguish in her words that the earl paused in surprise.

"I fear, Adine," he said, speaking with a great effort, "that there has been a very sad mistake made in this unhappy marriage of ours."

"There has indeed," cried Adine, half-angrily, for she altogether mistook the earl's meaning, and supposed him eagerly selfish to rid himself of the chain which bound him to her. "There has, as you say, Lord Roslyn, been a fearful mistake in this unhappy marriage. Can you not rid yourself of the fetters? We have, it is true, gone through the ceremony, but we are not bound together by any ties of affection. We have always lived separate lives, our hearts are estranged. You are ready to suspect and condemn me upon the slightest occasion, simply because, where we dislike, we become unjust and harsh in judgment. Eustace, can you not obtain a divorce? It is what you long for in your heart. Why attempt to deceive me any more?"

Lord Roslyn sat down before the library-table, and buried his face in his hands. It was some time before he could trust himself to speak:

"Adine," he said at last, lifting up his face, white, almost livid with pain, and looking fixedly at his wife. "Do you wish to be free from me that you may marry this Count Lechelle?"

Adine started to her feet at these words, and approached her husband with a vehement gesture.

"Eustace, Eustace! I would rather die," she said, desperately, "than marry the Count Lechelle."

"This mystery is maddening," said Lord Roslyn. "You meet this man—I have heard of it, Adine—at all hours, and under all circumstances. You have been intimate with him in your girlhood. You tell me that our marriage is an unhappy mistake, and you implore me for a divorce. Immediately afterwards, you exclaim passionately that you would rather die than marry the Count Lechelle. Let us be more open with one another, for pity's sake. I, to begin with, will sacrifice my pride, and consent to endure your contempt, rather than leave you under a wrong impression. You think I am anxious to be rid of you, when I count as nothing my position, my fortune, my life itself as weighed against—"

Just at this juncture, and when a few words more would have showed Adine her husband's heart, and have probably brought about an explanation that might have ended in happiness, Vayle Malvern, who had been for the last ten minutes listening at the door, burst without ceremony into the room.

(To be continued.)

THE LAW ON SPECIAL TRAINS FOR PRIZE-FIGHTERS.—After the 1st of April next any railway company that shall knowingly let for hire or otherwise provide any special train for the purpose of conveying parties to or to be present at any prize-fight, or who shall stop any ordinary trains to convenience or accommodate any parties attending a prize-fight at any place not an ordinary station on their line, shall be liable to a penalty, to be recovered in a summary way before two justices of the county in which such prize-fight shall be held or shall be attempted to be held, of such sum not exceeding 500*l.*, and not less than 200*l.*, as such justices shall determine.

ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS.—Letters from Naples report that Vesuvius, so far from being tranquil, has been giving indications of life throughout the summer. A party of foreigners, who are too often indisposed to take advice, resolved on ascending to the summit of the new cone. They had no sooner arrived, however, than they were assaulted by an unexpected shower of pumice and fragments of lava.

Several of the party were severely wounded, as much so, indeed, that they could scarcely descend the mountain and obtain the assistance which was necessary to enable them to continue their road to Rosina. The latest report states that Vesuvius increases in activity. Those who venture to ascend to the summit of the new cone, we are told, are presented with a magnificent spectacle, nothing less than a vast lake of boiling lava, which at intervals ejects dense columns of smoke, mingled with ashes and red-hot lava. The enjoyment of this spectacle is not, however, without great danger. The thunders are again loud and often repeated, so that the mountain itself trembles. These shocks are not confined to Vesuvius, but extend to the neighbourhood, and as far as Naples, where on Saturday, the 25th of July, one shock was felt which continued fifteen seconds. The report of Prof. Palmieri on that day was, "Vesuvius for four days has much increased in activity." The detonations are stronger and more frequent. The seismograph notes that the ground in Naples is slightly agitated. For the convenience of visitors, what is called a "Ristoratore" is about to be established in the Hermitage, where refreshment and a decent place of repose may be found. This looks as if another winter campaign was expected.

CURIOUS EFFECT OF FROST UPON BUCKWHEAT FIELDS IN GERMANY.

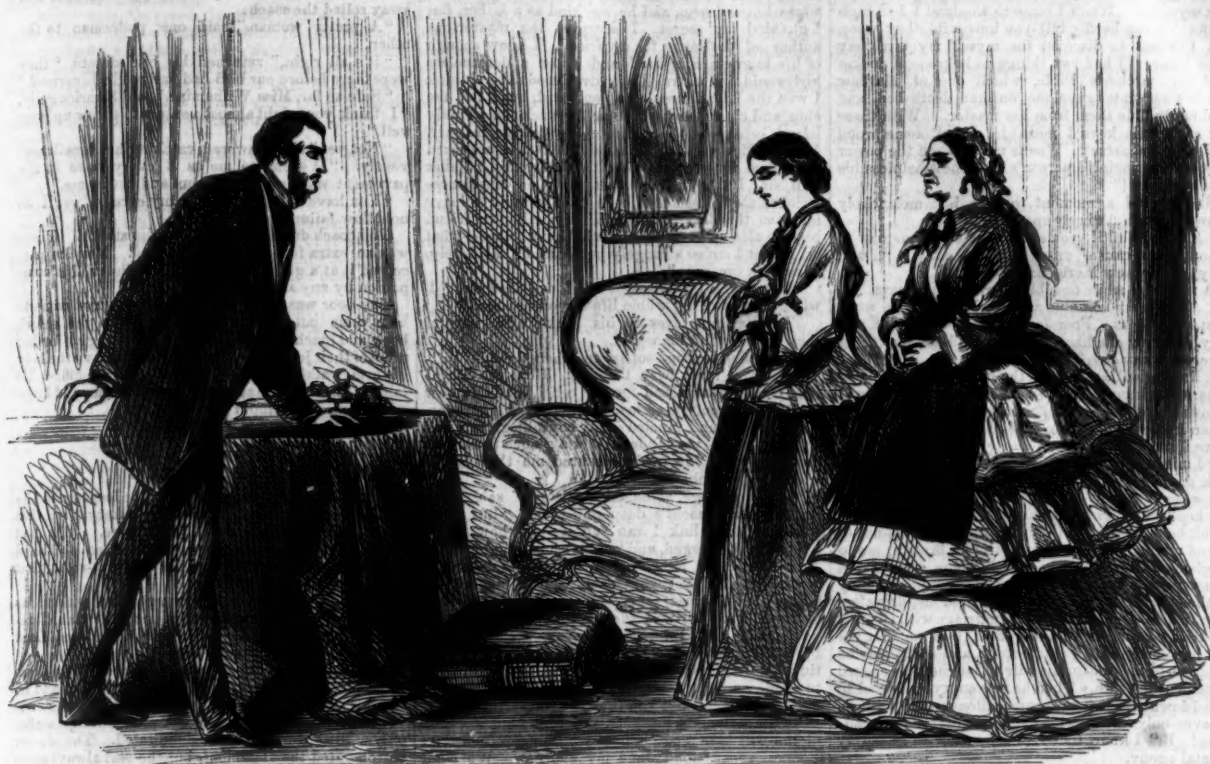
MR. PATRICK MATHEW, writing from Schönefeld, Blankensee, Holstein, on July 17, communicates the following intelligence:—

"In this quarter almost every field of buckwheat has suffered more or less by the frost of the nights of the 9th and 18th of June. In many fields one-third of the plants were killed, and those not killed to some extent nipped. In some fields, not much injured generally, tracts or roads of complete destruction were visible; some of them continue for more than 100 yards, others gradually disappearing at shorter distances, and of a width of from two to three feet, and in some places extending to double that width, as if a demon had been careering up and down, and blackening all his sulphurous fumes reached. In some fields of clover, at an earlier period, similar roads could be traced, but only extending to blackened marks where the feet of a creature in passing had touched. Clover is also different from buckwheat; being less succulent it can be frozen without injury, if not touched; but in the buckwheat no traces of the action of frost appeared. The destruction was continuous, and not as if caused by the stamping or treading of feet."

"The country people attribute these blackened roads, which generally appear in the young buckwheat after frost, to the scampering about of hares during the night when the plants are frozen, and that it is one of the many evils which result from protection of game. The marks in the clover, of the tramping of feet bruising the frozen plant, are evidently those of hares, but I could not see how the tramp of hares could effect so wide and continuous destruction in the braided buckwheat only a few inches high. The only way I could account for the mischief being done by hares was, that owing to the extreme stillness of the clear night the plants had been cooled down by radiation, several degrees lower than the freezing point, without causing congelation, and that the convulsions of the air caused by the animal skipping along had caused immediate congelation for some little distance on each side of the tract of the animal, whereas the rest of the field, though lowered in temperature below the freezing point, had never been frozen. I have noticed in the case of potatoes and fruits that the destruction is not caused by the severity of the cold acting on an impressive nervous system, so as to extinguish the vital spark, but that death by cold is a mere mechanical process of destruction, the expansion by congelation of the fluids in the full vessels or cells bursting them, and thus breaking the delicate vitæ-organical structure. I have repeatedly noticed that when potatoes or fruit are slightly dried, and the cells not completely distended with fluid, that congelation takes place without death—the vessels or cells not being quite full, bearing without fracture the expansion of the fluid they contain."

THE Emperor of Russia has ordered that in September of 1899 there shall be held at Moscow a general exhibition of Russian horses of from four to eight years old. Upwards of 60,000*fr.* and a number of medals are to be allotted as prizes.

DURING the excavations made at Genoa some time since an immense shell was found. The projectile, which was charged, is supposed to be one of the 13,000 thrown into the city in 1684 by Admiral Abraham Duquesne.



[A CHANGE OF DRESS.]

OCTAVIA'S PRIDE.

BY THE

Author of "Captain Frisky," "Leaves of Fate," &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. GREY met Maurice Middleton at the hall door when the latter returned that evening from his visit to Mathew Merle. Her husband's arrival, and a calmer conversation with Will Yarrel, had, in a measure, subdued Mrs. Grey's virtuous indignation. But she was one of those narrow-minded devotees to the outward forms of propriety, to whom any deviation is a positive crime. Her husband's persuasion had obtained her consent to poor Will's presence in the house until the morning train for London, but she showed by her cold and forbidding manner what she called a righteous rebuke for the whole proceeding. Mr. Grey, on the contrary, was warmly interested.

He met Maurice, as I have said, at the hall door, seized him at once by the arm, and drew him into the little ante-room, whispering softly, as if afraid a corps of detectives were at his heels.

"Look here, Middleton, things are growing warm. A policeman has been here this evening, enquiring if anyone has seen a boy of this description. He says a woman saw a man carrying such a lad, running down our lane. The apothecary likewise confirms the story, though fortunately he got your complexion wrong. He wanted to know what family I had, and I told him there was no one but my own, except some visitors, a Mr. and Mrs. Middleton. When I said that Mr. Middleton arrived in Liverpool several days ago, his curiosity concerning you ended. But they will be here again, and I dare say are on the watch now. You will never get that boy away without their knowing it. And Mrs. Grey is in a perfect panic lest he will be taken here. Now I'll tell you what you must do. She must take to her proper clothing, and you must have a coach here, and go off boldly as Mr. and Mrs. Middleton."

"But whatever will she think? And how can you tell her? I haven't allowed her to suspect I have seen through her disguise."

"It is no time for scruples of delicacy. I'll tell her myself, if you say so. But you are the right one to do it."

"Wouldn't Mrs. Grey——" began Maurice doubtfully.

"If you have any consideration for the girl's feelings, you won't allow Ellen to tell her. Good heavens,

man, these women are so hard on each other! Tell her yourself, she will take it best from you, and you'll find a way to do it gently. Ellen will give her the necessary clothing."

"If I had only found Jane," said Maurice impatiently.

"Ellen declares it is all an imposture, that you will find yourself in some disgraceful, if not positively criminal, affair. She says she knew you wouldn't find any Jane."

"I would as soon doubt the worth of my own mother or sister, were they alive," cried Maurice, valiantly, "as doubt that sweet, innocent face. Yes, I will tell her myself."

And he put his hat down, and walked up-stairs resolutely.

The still drooping figure was there in the easy-chair, just as he had left it, but he marked the deepened wistfulness of the eyes, and the quivering of the lips as she raised her head to greet him.

"Oh, sir, have you found Jane? And can we go away soon?"

"I am afraid it is scarcely prudent to leave until morning. There is more search than I imagined. This Mathew Merle is in deadly earnest certainly. I have seen him myself to-night."

"You have seen him—seen Mathew Merle? Oh, sir, you will not give me up to him."

"Indeed, I will not," answered Maurice, his own eyes misting over from the woful glance of those brown orbs. "But I am at an utter loss to understand why you may not boldly face him, and refuse to go with him, and why——"

He paused and bent down over a little vase of flowers on the table.

"And why," he added, in a voice which faltered despite his efforts, "you have been compelled to take refuge in a disguise, which I am sure is obnoxious and distasteful to you."

He did not raise his face from the flowers, nor glance towards the easy-chair. If he had, he would have seen the swift-coming blushes dispersed by a gentle dignity of manner, as new as becoming.

"You are right," said Will Yarrel, "one who has been so kind to me, who is risking so much to help me, ought to know the circumstances of my history. Jane knew it all, and I am certain Jane would approve my telling you. It is a very sad story. I suppose I was born in India, but I do not know more than Mathew Merle tells me. He says he is my uncle, but I do not believe it; my whole nature cries out against the belief, and besides if it were so, would he be so earnest to marry me to his son? It seems wrong and unnatural to me, but it is not for that I

most earnestly rebel. It is because George Merle, from my very earliest childhood, has been the ogre and terror of my life.

"I was brought up, you understand, in Mathew Merle's home. He has really a guardian's power, and within this last year he has used it in the most tyrannical fashion. The head and front of my offending was that I utterly refused and protested every time it was proposed, against a marriage with George Merle."

"You do not know him, of course. He is in India now, I suppose, but if you did, if you were on friendly terms, what is commonly called well acquainted, you would see, as I do, what a low, cruel, brutal nature his is. His father does not see, he is so wily and cunning, and even while he is cheating and deceiving him his father idolizes him. But in his very boyhood he vented upon me all the low spite and brutal tyranny of his nature. Oh, how many times I have vented my childish suffering in wild appeals for heaven to take me away, where my unknown parents had gone. How I have burst at him in fierce but unavailing indignation! How I have trembled and shivered only at the sound of his coming step! All that I could fear, dread, and loathe, George Merle has taught me. He made my child-life so miserable and forlorn, that, all unknowing of the great secrets of death, I prayed my poor little heart out, beseeching heaven to let me die."

"He went away to a school when I was fourteen, and from that time until this very year I had peace and quiet, and learned to find a little joy in life. And now, Mathew Merle, suddenly, tells me I am to marry George, and be rich, happy, and honoured. If he thrust me upon the brink of a bottomless pit I should not shrink back in such horror. Marry George Merle! I would not if I had only the alternative of thrusting a dagger into my own breast. I said so passionately and defiantly, and then Mathew Merle, who had hitherto left me alone, became this pitiless, tyrannical ruler from whom I have tried to escape."

"He took me, all of a sudden, without a single word of explanation, from our quiet home in Bombay and brought me to England. I made no objection, but rather rejoiced in the change, especially when I found that George was to remain behind. But I soon discovered it was but a change of persecutions. Oh, sir, what can be the reason that they are so determined upon my misery? It is not love for me. It would be the bitterest of mockery for them to pretend that George Merle wishes to marry me because he loves me. What is it then? I have tor-

tured my brain almost to frenzy trying to solve the mystery. When I came to England I had high hopes. I can hardly tell you how wild they were, but I meant to discover for myself my birth, my true home. I had two things to help me, a locket and my mother's Bible, which one of Mathew Merle's servants gave me on her death-bed, and told me to hide them from her master. With these for my magic keys I meant to unlock some proud and beautiful secret. Woe is me! When the power is in an unprincipled person's hand, how helpless his victim can be!"

She paused a moment to turn her melancholy brown eyes imploringly upon his.

"My poor child! you shall have some one now to espouse your cause," cried Maurice, hotly. "I will defy this Mathew Merle, and save you."

A mournful smile trembled through her tears.

"Ah, you are so noble and good! But I am worn to spiritlessness. Poor Jane was to be my staff and stay, and now she has vanished. Will not something take you away also?"

"No," cried Maurice, all the chivalry of his noble nature springing up within his breast. "I will devote myself to your service. But tell me all, and when I know the whole, I can judge if the plan I have formed will answer."

"I might make it a long story, but it will astonish you, and it pains me. It is enough to say he took me where he could work his will without hindrance. He kept me a close prisoner looked fancy room. I think he pretended to the landlady that I was not of sound mind. I did not know why he brought me to England, unless to make sure in some way of the identity of some claim to which I am positive my birth entitles me. But he persecuted me, day after day, to obtain my consent to a marriage with George. He tried coaxing and bribing first, told me that his son had come into a great fortune, and could only be happy in taking me for his wife. I laughed the absurd statement to scorn. Then he was angry, and tried to grind down my spirit with persecutions and privations. Heaven only knows why I was not driven to madness! But I know that I shudder now to recall my mental agony."

"I had determined to use every means of escape from him, and twice nearly succeeded. But that woman who kept the house, of whom I was almost as much afraid as of Mathew Merle, detected me, and cut off my only hope. One day a singular-looking person passed through the corridor, which was a sort of promenade. My room had a little glass pane in the top of the door, and from my dreary perch in the high-barred windows I could look through. I noticed him the first time he came, in a listless fashion—but the next my attention was drawn by seeing the landlady point me out, and allow him to look at me through the glass door. A strange impulse made me burst forth in a wild appeal for help. I said I was dying by inches, growing mad with misery. I declared a lonely desert, a trackless ocean, was preferable to the life I led."

"The stranger listened attentively, and it almost seemed to me the landlady's hard heart was melted, for after the man in the long cloak and the bushy whiskers had left, she came to my room, and sat down and talked with me. She asked me what I had done to anger my uncle. I told her nothing except that I would not marry his son. She said she was sorry for me, but she was a poor woman, and could not help me. It struck me to be odd, that when she said it, she put her hand in her pocket, and I heard the chinking of coin. I tried my best to conciliate her, hoping to escape through her help, and though I did not care for it, I drank a cup of coffee she brought me, just after Mathew Merle had paid me his usual afternoon visit. Oh, sir, you will believe me—will you not?—when I tell you that I knew nothing more from that moment until I woke, far out at sea, on board the ship Sea Foam. I was there, dressed in these clothes—with gold in my pocket, and a trunk filled with boy's clothing, but not a vestige of my old life left me, except my Bible, and that had been mutilated, for the blank pages and every scrap of writing had been cut out. Even the precious locket I had secretly worn around my neck was gone. This letter was in my pocket. Read it, sir, and try to have pity, and imagine what must have been my feelings, awakening there under such circumstances, the only woman on board, a ship's crew and officers—every soul an utter stranger."

She drew forth a small pocket-book, took out the mysterious letter she had so carefully preserved, and put it into his hand.

Maurice read it with intense interest, and looked over to her in pitying sympathy.

"Now," said she, "you will not blame me that I accepted the disguise thrust upon me. Was it not indeed the wisest course? At all events I kept my

secret from them. The captain was a generous, warm-hearted man, and he was kind as a father, but I guarded my secret. I accepted the mysterious author of the letter for my friend. I knew enough of life to guess how hard and bitter a defenceless girl would find a struggle for livelihood to be. I think I won the friendliness of all on board, but I left the ship, and chose to remain alone for weeks on a lonely island, because in the still most mysterious manner, Mathew Merle, whom I had left in London, appeared and asked to take passage with the captain. Think of it, sir; I then learned that the poor, conscience-stricken shipmaster had been paid heavily to leave me upon the deserted island. My unknown friend became also an enemy. Oh, what have I done—what am I, that I am so strangely persecuted? I, a lonely, friendless creature."

"No longer friendless," cried out Maurice, "I will gladly give my whole life to your service." Those brilliant eyes of his spoke a language of their own beyond his words.

Wilhelmine blushed softly, and then sighed. "But you must hear the rest. How the Royal Bess came to the island for my relief, and Mathew Merle again confronted me. He pretended ignorance. For a little time I fancied in my boy's disguise I was safe, but when we landed I met a glance from that basilisk eye of his, which assured me that I was known and watched."

"It is a strange, astonishing history," said Maurice, after a moment's deep reflection. "But there is one missing link I can supply. Mathew Merle himself was drugged, and put on board another ship. Your mysterious letter-writer, I think, took care of you both. And yet what could be the object? It seems likely, indeed, that you have a rightful claim to some fortune, or why should these Merles persecute you so long, and yet persecute you so shamefully? I will give the matter closer reflection when I have time. Now then for my plan. It will be less likely to displease you, after this explanation. You will not be angry if I tell you that you must pass for a little time as my wife. Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Middleton will take a coach boldly to-morrow morning. I gave your friend Jane my address. We shall probably hear from her to-morrow, and as soon as they abandon the search, you may resume, if you choose, your original journey."

"You are so kind—you are so good," faltered the girl; "how can I ever repay you?"

Mr. Maurice Middleton did not speak the thought which came to him, and which sent a thrill of pleasure through his heart.

"And now," said he, "I may tell Mrs. Grey to make ready Mrs. Middleton's clothing."

She blushed, smiled, and bent her head a little haughtily, as she drew out some gold and handed him.

"You will pay her. I—I do not wish to owe anything to the lady, for she has hardly been as kind and forbearing as one happy and prosperous woman should be towards a less fortunate sister."

"I understand you, and I resent the unkindness more indignantly than you can do. But remember that some natures are so shallow and narrow, they make more noise and stir in flowing over a few pebbles, than a broad, majestic river does in sweeping grandly to the ocean."

"I am ashamed of my poor resentment, when I, a stranger, am receiving such generous and disinterested kindness," she said, the next moment, in self-reproach.

Mrs. Grey after his brief explanation was more gracious likewise, and the pair went off to her chamber, from which issued now and then the gay prattle of voices with occasional bursts of girlish laughter.

In a short time they reappeared. If Will Yarrel had been strikingly handsome and interesting-looking, what could Maurice think of this fair young girl who came gliding behind Mrs. Grey, her cheeks glowing with blushes, her eyes shining with joyful hope?

"Who would recognize her?" exclaimed Mr. Grey. "Why she has added three years to her looks, and lost nothing by it either," he added.

"But I tell her we must contrive to cover up those short curls with false braids. The police have such terrible eyes for trifles. Thomas must go out for some, and when she has on a hat and veil, I think we may defy them," said his wife, having by this time nearly overcome her scruples.

The next morning early, the coach that had been ordered for Mr. Grey's visitors made its appearance. Two policemen were lounging along the side-walk, and policemen have a way of taking note of passing events without seeming to use their eyes at all. Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, however, seemed to have no concern about the matter. The Greys came down the steps for the last words of leave-taking. There were warm adieux and many promises of a reciprocated visit. The trunk was strapped behind, and away rolled the coach.

"A pretty woman," said one policeman to the other.

"It's all right," returned his confederate, "they were there before our bird had arrived in Liverpool."

"Safe so far, Miss Wilhelmine," said Maurice gaily, "I think you might almost venture to throw up your veil."

"Not yet," she answered, catching her breath nervously. "It seems to me as if every stone in the pavement was ready to cry out and betray me."

"You have not been under my care before; I do not allow failure or betrayal."

The coach drove briskly up to the station. There was an extra force of police around. Maurice perceived it at a glance, but would not disturb his companion by any allusion to it.

The door was opened, and the coachman came to help them out. Maurice gathered up the shawl, book, and luncheon basket, pretty trifles to give farther proof of their journey's genuineness, and gave the lady his arm, walking on carelessly towards the office. He felt her fingers close suddenly upon his arm, and knew what it meant without her whisper:

"Oh, sir, there is Mathew Merle."

CHAPTER XXII.

LADY MARY'S sudden illness made less stir in the gay circle gathered at Chichester Rectory, than that of any other member could have done. She had mingled so little with them, had been so still and quiet upon her brief visits to the drawing-room, that she was scarcely missed.

She did not withdraw anyone else either, as would have been the case had it been General Wainwright, for she herself voluntarily shortened Lord Ronald's visits to her sick-room.

She was nervously anxious indeed, that there should be no interruption of the festivities, and no shadow cast upon their gaiety. She was not very ill, she said to the countess, with a wistful smile, only a little worn-out and debilitated. The doctor corroborated the statement, but the earl always came away with a grave face from her chamber. Perhaps he alone saw the mask removed, and knew all that she was suffering.

She had been too ill immediately after for anyone to question her concerning the unknown visitor, whose call had so excited the idle curiosity of the guests.

And the earl himself had settled the matter by telling them the woman came with a message from an old friend in India, but that her ladyship had been taken ill too soon to hear out her communication. No one, therefore, thought of connecting the two events.

The earl had somehow lost a little of his own cheerfulness and serenity, and if anyone had noticed him particularly, they would have discovered his nervous watch of all arrivals.

He came out from his room when the mail arrived, and, contrary to his usual habit, opened the bag himself, and with his own hands looked over the letters—a task which from time immemorial had devolved upon the butler.

He, moreover, playfully forestalled Lord Ronald, and carried Lady Mary's correspondence to its owner, and under her eye opened and read the letters. The letter for which they had both secretly looked, and which they had mutually dreaded, without allowing the other to suspect it, came one morning about ten days after the visit of Jane West.

The earl brought it in with one or two others on business matters, and silently handed them for her to examine the handwriting of the addresses.

Lady Mary was bolstered up in the easy-chair. She sorted them over listlessly, and laid them in her lap.

"This one is from Thompson, the agent; this from Fryer, the housekeeper, and this from Cross and Blackwell, and this—"

She paused, looked long and earnestly at the coarse, rather feeble-looking chirography, and said in a troubled voice:

"I do not know that writing at all."

The earl stretched out his hand to take it.

"Let me read it for you, Mary."

But her thin fingers held it firmly, and in a moment more she broke the seal. A low cry broke over the pale lips, but she checked it, and glanced apprehensively around, to see if her maid or the nurse were present. They had, however, both retired on the earl's appearance.

She went back and read it over carefully, then held it out to him, moaning:

"Oh, I would that I were dead! There is another, still another, in possession of that fatal secret. Oh, Philip, Philip, the way of the transgressor is hard!"

"Hush, Mary!" exclaimed the earl.

But his own hand trembled over the letter, and his brow grew dark and stern.

"Well," said he, presently, "the fellow must be looked after. It is a shameful thing in Doctor Morley that he did not destroy those papers. There will be no end to it if once we begin to bribe to silence such a one as wrote that letter. I have half a mind to defy him. After all the whole affair is long passed there could be no great harm come from the exposure."

Lady Mary clasped her hands with a wild, upward glance.

"No harm! Oh, Philip, think of the disgrace!"

The earl knit his forehead savagely.

"Who would take this man's word against that of the Earl of Chichester? How has he obtained the papers? You say the woman declared they had been stolen. Is a thief to blacken the name of a peer of the realm?"

Lady Mary caught her breath gaspingly. She said only two words, but the sorrowful, reproachful eyes held an accusation which her brother read intelligently.

"Oh, Philip!"

He flushed even to his forehead, and stammered:

"I know I have no right, remembering my follies, to condemn any wrong in others. Perhaps you will say," he added, bitterly, "I am but a fit companion for such, since my noble birth did not hinder my sharing their wrong-doing. I don't wonder you are shocked. My poor Mary! when I remember what suffering it has brought upon you, I wonder you do not fill my ears with incessant and angry reproaches. You who are innocent, seem to have borne the worst anguish, the most punishment."

"I innocent!" faltered Lady Mary's shivering lips, and then she turned her face to the pillow, and closed her eyes.

"At all events," said the earl, regaining his composure, "this fellow must be granted the interview he desires. It may be a salutary thing for him to discover, that he will not hold his bargain with a sick woman, but must deal with the Earl of Chichester himself. You empower me to act for you?"

She was silent a moment.

"Of course you must. Is not the affair mine rather than yours, except of course for your unfortunate attachment to Morley," he repeated, a little impatiently.

"I should like to see the man myself, Philip, if I am able, but I will give him to understand that you are to settle the affair."

"It is suicidal for you to submit yourself to so much excitement, Mary."

"Do you think it is any easier to stay in this room, and know that you are with him," she asked mournfully. "We must get those papers, Philip, let their price be what they may, and I ask it as my right, that you give them to me before you examine them yourself."

"They must be promptly burnt. I will have no more dallying. Then I understand that I am to allow this Mathew Merle to come here, on the day, and at the hour, he has appointed?"

"Yes. If I am able I shall receive him. I will mention to Ronald that I expect such a person on business, and there will be no comment. When is the hour?"

"At four, the day after to-morrow. Take my advice, Mary, and spare yourself such a trying interview. I admit that it disturbs me to think of it—you—Lady Mary Falkner lowering yourself enough to parley with this low-born man."

A bitter smile crossed Lady Mary's white face.

"Alack, Philip, my self-love can receive no wound from such a source, nor my pride be in any way lowered. Perhaps because it already lies so low—so low," she repeated drearily.

He looked at her for a moment gloomily, almost indignantly, but a tender compassion stole over him as she closed her eyes wearily. How white and wan it was, how full of lines left there by keenest suffering, the face he could still recall so fair, bright, and gay in its girlish bloom. Struck dumb by the consciousness of his own share in the change, he only kissed her, and left her without another word.

The earl had prepared an excursion, to take away from the house the majority of his guests, upon the afternoon the unwelcome visitor was expected, but a lowering sky, with occasional showers of rain, disturbed his calculations. And they were unusually dull and listless from the disappointment, and with weary faces were distributed at the windows, watching for a sign of fair weather, when the carriage brought Mathew Merle to the entrance steps. Now strangers arriving and departing from Chichester Rectory were too common to attract attention. It had only been the fact of her coming unattended in a postchaise, that had drawn the observation of the company upon Jane West.

Mathew Merle then, notwithstanding his singular

looks, excited no comment. Only Octavia Wainwright, sitting near the window, playing chess with Lord Ronald, uttered a slight exclamation of astonishment, and cast a second enquiring glance at the window. Felix was in the room at the time, drawing a plan for the countess, of a new summer-house. Whatever else might occupy him, he lost not a look or gesture of Miss Wainwright's.

He laid down his pencil and walked straight to a window, reaching it just in time to recognize the missing witness as he stepped under the portal.

Miss Wainwright had made a false move and was jesting over it, but she found time to look up questioningly as Felix returned. Their eyes met, and there was a little confusion on both sides. She finished her game with Lord Ronald, however, and Felix returned to his drawing. The postchaise still waited at the door.

As the chess-table was wheeled away, Octavia rose, carelessly, shook out her flounces, and sauntered across the room, stopping, as if by accident, at the table where the summer-house plan was being warmly discussed by the countess and one of her guests, Miss Nettie Hatherway, an East India heiress, who was quite willing to commence a flirtation with the grave, unimpressible, but remarkably interesting Mr. Thorne.

Miss Wainwright had not failed to notice the young lady's kindly interest in the work of Felix Thorne. It is possible she took a wicked pleasure in seeing that quick sparkle come into his eye, and the spot of crimson gather on his mallow cheek when she approached. She leaned over the table a moment, and followed with her white fingers the lines on the plan.

"Very good, Mr. Thorne," said she, "but do you know I detect a blunder, and I am wondering how you will repair it?"

He recognized the hidden meaning, and answered quickly.

"If there be a blunder, it can be remedied by prompt action, Miss Wainwright."

She seemed still to be examining the plan with keen interest.

"I should like to know how you will commence," she said, slowly putting her finger again on one of the foundation lines; "what will you do here, to make the upper structure secure?"

"Lay a straight plank, Miss Wainwright."

"But the danger—the lack of security," she said, meaningly.

A singular smile came to his thin lips; he compelled her to look at him by a powerful magnetic glance.

"I shall not be afraid of danger. I will work simply and fearlessly, let what will come."

She lowered her eyelids slowly; a slight shiver shot through her stately figure, and then without a word she turned away.

She took a seat in the window nearest the steps, and sat there after Felix had left the room. She saw him take up his position by the postchaise, and knew what he was waiting for. A growing fear, and a weary pain was in her heart, but she kept up a playful conversation with Lord Ronald, who came to her side, almost as inevitably as the magnetic needle to the pole.

She knew when Mathew Merle came out, she saw his face suddenly flash over with fierce anger, and noted the steady determination with which Felix confronted him.

"Oh, what would I give to hear what they are saying!" thought she, feverishly, and yet responded with a careless smile to Lord Ronald's jest.

There were but a few words spoken there, but Felix took a card from Mathew Merle, bowed, and came back into the house.

Octavia Wainwright found means that evening to steal into the library, where he sat poring over the earl's Australian papers.

He rose from his chair when he saw the stern set of her lip, the feverish gleaming of her singular eyes.

"Miss Wainwright!" he ejaculated, in astonishment.

"Felix," said she, in a proud, hard voice, "what are you going to do?"

"Proceed at once to file in our petition for a new trial. You are aware that the missing witness has returned. The case of Middleton versus Wainwright will come up again at the next court."

She was snapping angrily at a bracelet of strange pearls and tiny shells which ornamented her fair, exquisitely-shaped arm.

"Do you deny that you are ignorant of the mine you may spring?" she asked, hastily.

"I do not know, and I do not care," returned he, passionately. "If the edifice tumbles, it will fall on other heads as well."

"You are cruel and vindictive. You do not care for any gain of your own. You only wish to punish me. You sent this Mathew Merle away once. Why

have you brought him back? I warn you that he will not help you to one farthing's worth."

"He will prove the legitimacy of my father's claim. He will show to the world that the proud Wainwrights have usurped another's rightful claim." She was standing still, looking down upon the carpet pensively.

"Cruel and pitiless," she murmured again.

"And is no one else cruel?" he burst forth impetuously, "have you any mercy upon those who come in your path?"

She lifted those large eyes of hers, dilated with a sudden terror.

"What do you mean?"

"Ask your own conscience, which you are smothering with the iron hand of your imperious pride. This Mathew Merle accused me of a twofold stratagem. He says I concocted a strange plan to send a poor girl drifting helplessly upon the world. He says my disguise of a long cloak, sloshed cap, and bushy beard has been shrewdly penetrated. Look at you, Miss Wainwright, this thing of which he accuses me is utterly new to me. But I know something of such a cloak, cap, and wig, and I guess who has been masquerading in them. I used them once myself. I took them out of the old closet and used them, but of such a girl, the ship Sea Foam, and a Captain Loyal I know nothing. Speak, Miss Wainwright, what does your conscience say to you, who accuse me of being cruel and merciless?"

The proud form was drooping, the lips trembled out of their sternness, but she flung out her white hands in a defiant gesture.

"I am not afraid of you, Felix. I do not care what you suspect, or think."

"If I could only compel you to love me with one half the passion which consumes me," he said, fiercely.

She smiled bitterly. How blind these men could be! How easily cajoled by a woman's art! But the moment after, the poor exultation of such a thought died out. A dreamy haze crept into those resplendent eyes, the soft tender curves came back to the scarlet lips.

"There are two natures in me, Felix," she said, slowly, "one that you love, and one that you despise. I wonder which will conquer?"

"Who can doubt?" returned Felix, looking at her with a strange blending of adoration and anger; "your pride and ambition, Miss Wainwright, sweep away all other considerations."

She sighed heavily, and then laughed.

"Well, if you are determined upon war, it is a consolation to know that I can step aside from the ruin, in which you hope to involve me as well as yourself. My pride and ambition can ask no richer tribute than lies waiting for a beckoning gesture of mine."

"I know your meaning. I am half-persuaded you are right. Yet I do not forget that the Falkners and Chichesters are proud and exacting also."

"Lord Ronald loves me," said Miss Wainwright, but there was no womanly conscious blush upon her cheek.

"His love is like a mountain rill in comparison with mine," said Felix, fiercely.

She threw back the luxuriant ripples of her fair hair from her broad white temples, and looked into his face bravely.

"Octavia, you are right, you have a dual nature. It is the truest and best that is pleading with you now. Your pride and ambition may be gratified, but your heart will be starved," he cried, beseechingly. "Come to a better refuge!"

He half-opened his arms, and all the passion and strength of his powerful nature seemed to have passed into those glittering eyes of his.

She stood a moment trembling, once actually took a step towards him, and then suddenly she turned and fled.

Felix sank back into the chair, and dropped his head to the table with a bitter groan.

(To be continued.)

COINS ISSUED IN 1867.—No new sovereigns were coined in 1867, a circumstance which has not happened for years. No new crowns or half-crowns were coined, but that is not an unusual thing; no half-crowns have been coined since 1851. 992,795 half-sovereigns were coined in 1867, and 423,720 florins, but both of these are much smaller numbers than usual. 2,166,120 shillings were coined, 2,362,240 sixpences (both numbers much below the average), 4,158 fourpences (an invariable number year after year), 717,288 silver threepences, and the usual 4,751 silver twopences and 7,920 silver pence. The copper coinage of 1867 consisted of the small number of 5,483,520 pence, 2,598,800 half-pence, and 5,017,600 farthings. Thus nearly 19,000,000 of pieces of money were issued from the Mint in 1867, a year in which the amount of coinage was extra-

ordinarily small. Worn silver coinage of the nominal value of 120,000*l.* was purchased for coinage in the year; but the Mint value (5*s.* 6*d.* per oz.) was only 103,439*l.*, so that the loss by re-coinage was 16,561*l.*

SIR ALVICK.

CHAPTER XXV

To keep the several characters of our story well in hand, it is necessary that we should return to look after Mr. Hassan Wharfe, of whom we have said very little since he withdrew from the baronet's study, just as Major Varyl entered.

It is due to a gentleman of Mr. Hassan Wharfe's lofty pretensions and distinguished exterior that we should again bring him before the reader, especially as he and his have much to do with the plot of this story.

The baronet had consigned him to the care of John Roffton, and the latter, not at all pleased therewith, surlily conducted the attorney through hall and corridor, in grave silence, bearing a lamp to illumine the way.

"I suppose the Star Room will do," muttered Roffton, as he opened a door and entered a room known in the mansion by that name, from the many carvings of those luminaries upon the oaken walls.

John Roffton advanced to a table in the centre of the room, placed thereon the lamp, saying, as he did so:

"I will send up a servant to attend to your wants, sir."

He then turned to withdraw, for he had no desire to exchange the compliments of the evening with Mr. Hassan Wharfe.

To his surprise, he saw that Mr. Wharfe had already placed himself in a chair, leaned his back against the door, and coiled his fingers tightly around the key in the lock.

If ever a man's air and attitude said anything very plainly, the air and attitude of Mr. Wharfe said:

"Here we are. We are going to have a little chat, if you please; and if you don't please, we are going to have a little fracas, in which I am sure to be winner."

John Roffton had always feared this serpentlike man, even before his persecutions placed him in the condemned cell.

He knew Mr. Hassan Wharfe could not again persecute him upon the same charges, for he carried in his bosom a full pardon from the queen; yet his old dread of the man had made him turn pale when he first saw him in the baronet's study—made him hasten to deny that he had recognized him, because he felt that such was the desire of the attorney—and made him still wish to be anywhere but in his unpleasant presence.

"Simon Sturley," squeaked Mr. Wharfe.

He then paused to whistle a prison air—one his listener had often heard while he was in Newgate.

"My name is John Roffton, sir."

"Is it? Changed it, eh? Good idea—not valid though, unless by Act of Parliament."

"Simon Sturley was condemned to be hanged," said Roffton, bitterly. "He was innocent. His face went against him. But no matter. He doesn't live now. He changed his name—and here's John Roffton to tell you so."

"Take care. John Roffton's face is a bad one, too."

"Mr. Wharfe," said Roffton, desperately, "I don't say I am not afraid of you. But I do say that as soon as John Roffton—that's me, sir—as soon as John Roffton suspects that Mr. Hassan Wharfe is trying to put John Roffton in prison again, then there'll be one attorney less in England. I makes no threat, sir. I only say that to you, without witnesses. Now, I'd be obliged to you to let John Roffton go about his business."

So saying, he made two rather threatening steps towards Mr. Hassan Wharfe.

That gentleman did not move. He gazed steadily into the very fierce eyes of John Roffton, and said:

"Don't be a simpleton, and I will make you a rich man."

"I don't care to be a rich man, Mr. Wharfe."

"What! Not to be able to pay that debt which has made your father a prisoner since you were a youth?" exclaimed Mr. Wharfe. "I saw him just before I came from London."

"Saw my father?" asked Roffton, changing from fierceness to grief.

"Now let us consider," remarked Mr. Wharfe. "Your father was arrested for debt more than twenty-two years ago?"

"More than twenty-two years ago," groaned John Roffton.

"He couldn't pay, and so he was cast into prison, and there he has been pining and groaning ever since. You were almost a lad then—when he was arrested, Sturley—beg your pardon—Roffton, John Roffton, Mr. John Roffton—or shall we say John Roffton, Esq., of Ulder Manor?"

"Plain John Roffton, sir, and nothing else. You were speaking of my father, sir," replied his listener, eagerly.

"Oh, yes, of James Sturley, who was arrested for debt, say more than twenty years ago, and has never been out of prison since. His wife—your mother, Mr. Stur—Roffton, died, and all his children died but one—that's you—and he never had the pleasure—I mean the privilege to see one of them, wife or children, in their sickness, health, nor burial. Hard it was. Man arrested for debt as great a criminal as far as placing him in gaol goes, as a burglar, a thief, or a murderer. That's the law. Hurrah and a hip for the law, Mr. Stur—Roffton."

"Confound the law!" exclaimed John Roffton. "What had my father done to be imprisoned?"

"My excited hearer," replied Mr. Hassan, coiling his legs into something which looked like what sailors call a running bowline in a snarl, "he was security for a friend, and his friend couldn't or didn't pay, and the law took all the possessions of James Sturley, and the sale thereof being less than the debt, the law took him."

"Your grandfather, Amos Jarles, was the man for whom my father gave his bond," said John Roffton. "Amos Jarles is free, and my father is in a debtor's prison, where he has been for twenty-two or three years."

"Amos Jarles is a lawyer. Perhaps it does look strange to you, Mr. Stur—Roffton, that it should be so; but you do not understand the beauties of the law as regards debtors. But you do understand that your father has grown gray and withered, and feeble-minded in prison for debt."

"He was security for a man he had every confidence in, for your grandfather, for Amos Jarles, that was all. If he had committed murder, he could not have been more severely tortured than he has been. He would have been hanged, and then out of his misery. But as he was an honest debtor he was thrust into prison, and half-starved and treated like a dog, and—"

"There, that is the law," interrupted Mr. Wharfe. "Well, he is in prison, where he has been for more than twenty years, and where he will be for—say for life—unless I set him free."

"You!"

"No, you."

"I?"

"Yes, by being my friend, my ally. You can open the doors of his prison. Nobody but you."

John Roffton wiped his hot face and sat down, sick at heart. He knew Hassan Wharfe had some deep purpose in view; something in which he needed John Roffton, or by which he intended to ruin John Roffton.

"You refused to go with us before, or rather we feared you would betray us," continued Mr. Wharfe, moving himself and his chair towards his man, as a snake gradually edges his way to his victim. "You did not gain much. You were very near being hanged. Sir Alvick saved you. Now be with us, and you shall open the doors of your father's prison and lead him back to life and liberty."

"What is it that you desire of me?" gasped John Roffton, almost suffocated by the contact of his tempter, for Mr. Wharfe had coiled one of his long arms about him, in the most persuasive and confidential manner imaginable.

"Simply to hold your tongue, no matter what may happen. Pretend to be the devoted servant of Sir Alvick—you do not like him. You loved Hugh De Lisle, and Sir Alvick had Hugh De Lisle shot."

"Very well. I do not say that I like Sir Alvick."

"Good. But do not let him imagine that you do not like him. I do not intend to tell you all that may happen very soon. I only desire that you shall hold your tongue as regards all that has happened."

"All that happened when?"

"When you went to Glenrych in Wales with Lord Hayward. All that happened when you were a servant of Ross Chaffton and Miss Aspa Jarles. You know that Sir Alvick and Aspa Jarles once loved—you know that Aspa Jarles bore a son, and that Sir Alvick was the father of that son—"

"The son is dead," said John Roffton.

"Prove it."

"I know that Aspa Jarles abandoned the infant when it was hardly a year old."

"And that is all that you do know," said Mr. Wharfe. "You may be called upon to prove that. Now, I am that son, and I have not the slightest recollection that I ever died."

John Roffton stared at the speaker, whose visage was bent down and forward, and gazing into his own.

"You! I have always heard that you were the son of Richard Wharfe, who married a daughter of Amos Jarles, named Clementia."

"Did you ever meet with that daughter, Clementia?"

"Never."

"Did you ever meet with anybody who had ever seen that daughter, Clementia?"

"I believe not, if you say so."

"Of course not, for no such person as Clementia Jarles ever lived. It was a fiction. Why and wherefore it was concocted events will prove. I am the son of Sir Alvick and Aspa Jarles—"

"I never heard that they were married."

"Perhaps not. But they were. That is my affair, and I am able to attend to it. All I wish you to do is to remain silent, and if you are called upon to testify, know nothing, or only what we may tell you to know."

"Whom do you mean by we?"

"You will or may not learn hereafter. Hold your tongue; pretend to dislike us, especially me, and report all that Sir Alvick says and does to me or to my grandfather, as soon as possible. Do this, and I will place in your hand a full discharge of all debts now detaining your father in prison, and when my claims shall have been established, present you with a thousand pounds in hand. What do you say?"

John Roffton had no confidence in the sincerity of Hassan Wharfe, and he replied, bluntly:

"I will not act in the dark. I will not work with nothing of your promises in hand. My father is old and feeble in mind. In fact, it may be cruel to take him away, since nearly all that is left of his mind clings to his prison. After he is free he may yearn to go back, where he has lived a lifetime. Give me a clear discharge of all his debts first, and then we may agree. Who holds all the debts? I was told in London that every debt had been bought up by someone, but I could not learn who held them. If I had, I would have gone on my knees, and vowed slavery to him if he would free my father."

"You swear that?"

"I swear it."

"Well, I will tell you the name of the man who has bought up every debt that now imprisons your father. Amos Jarles."

"Great heaven! The very man for whose debts my poor father was arrested!" groaned John Roffton. "But there were other debts, and other detainers were served upon them."

"Of course. When one creditor imprisons a debtor his other creditors always come upon him. That is human nature. But Amos Jarles is now sole creditor, for he is possessor of every claim."

"I have paid some of them," said Roffton. "Heaven knows that I would have paid all if I had been able."

"Amos Jarles has all that have not been paid. All will be made over to you if you will agree to be our ally."

"You mean your accomplice," said Roffton, bitterly.

"I mean what I say, Mr. Stur—Roffton. Our ally."

"I will agree to nothing, so long as my father's liberty is not in my hands," replied Roffton, sturdily.

Mr. Hassan Wharfe saw that he was firm and distrustful. The game he was playing, whether he was the son of Sir Alvick or not, was a bold and uncertain one. He might not need the aid of Roffton, yet he feared he might.

He twisted, coiled, and eyed John Roffton very sharply.

At length he spoke as he drew a packet of papers from his bosom.

"We knew that you were at Ulder Manor," he said, "and so I have the notes and papers all with me. We expected this demand on your part, and I am well prepared to meet it."

John Roffton's deep-set eyes gleamed brightly as he looked at the packet. His heart leaped with delight.

"After all," reflected Mr. Wharfe, "if this man plays false he can do us little harm. He is a pardoned convict, and we can easily have his evidence rejected. As for myself, I do not believe that he knows anything of any consequence in the matter. We want him to be quiet, that is all. He is a silly fellow, and may feel grateful. Besides, he will undoubtedly hurry to London to free his father, and before he has time to think of anything else, all may be made right. It is worth the risk, and, indeed, there is no risk, for we gain nothing by keeping the old man in prison."

"Here are all the necessary papers," he said aloud, and John Roffton grasped them eagerly.

"Look over them. You know all about the debts—"

"Should I not," exclaimed John Roffton bitterly, and yet joyfully. "For years each one has been burning upon my brain. Know them! Ay, every one, better than my poor father himself ever knew them!"

He opened the packet. His repeated efforts, year after year, to obtain the aged debtor's release had made him familiar with all the forms of the law connected with the case, and he rapidly convinced himself that in his hands, at last, was one of the great dreams of his life, and despite his instinctive dislike and actual fear of Mr. Hassan Wharfe, he felt almost willing to embrace him.

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Wharfe, keenly observing the man's delight, and pretending to wipe a tear of sympathy from his eyes. "I had hard work to worm those papers out of old Amos Jarles."

"Curses fall on him!" exclaimed Roffton.

"Of course, curse him as hard as you like, if it relieves your feelings," said Mr. Wharfe. "I had to exhaust my stock of imprecations, maledictions, and *et cetera* of that kind before he would give up the papers. He said you and old Sturley, instead of being a pair of grateful men, would put your hands together to get a chance to fly at his throat. But," continued Mr. Wharfe, in an oily tone, "I am one that can sympathize with generous and noble natures—from a depth of refined sentiment for which few give me credit for, very few, I may say, emphatically, not one, myself excepted. Give me your hand, Mr. Stur-Roffton—your hand."

John Roffton extended his hand very reluctantly, notwithstanding Mr. Wharfe had just placed his father's freedom in that hand; and the fingers and palm of Mr. Wharfe coiled, twined and wound around his like a nest of eels, cold, slimy, fishy.

John Roffton shuddered, for all that he was a hardy, rude kind of man, for he remembered that he was shaking hands with one who had tried to hang him, and who, no doubt, would like to see him hanged.

"We are friends now, are we not?" said Mr. Wharfe. "You agree to be our ally."

"I fear you mean your accomplice, but I have no love for Sir Alvick, though, as he saved my life, I would have served him faithfully still, had he not had my beloved captain shot yonder in Spain."

"You mean Hugh De Lisle."

"Yes, the noblest heart that ever beat—"

"Of course," interrupted Mr. Wharfe, who disliked to hear anyone praised. "But I have heard that you knew something of the origin of Hugh De Lisle."

"Did you and others not persecute me because I would not admit that I knew anything about his origin? Are you going to begin that business again? I tell you that if I know anything, I can prove nothing—"

"Oh, we know that you can prove nothing. We only desired to hear what you know—and so forth. But as Hugh De Lisle is dead, it is of no moment now. But we need say no more at present. Please have my two attendants sent up to my room—they are below. Remember our alliance, or I may be angry," said Mr. Wharfe, with eyes which said:

"Deceive or betray, and I'll put a rope around your neck before the year is out."

Glad to escape from his presence, John Roffton hurried away, found a servant, bade him attend to the wants of Mr. Hassan Wharfe, and then returned to the baronet's study, where he met Hugh De Lisle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BEING left alone, Mr. Hassan Wharfe glanced scrutinizingly about the apartment which had been assigned to him. There was little to attract his attention, except that the furniture and appointments in general declared the great wealth of Sir Alvick Ulster.

Mr. Hassan, in the duties or requirements of his profession, had often been into the abode of the titled and wealthy. It was true that he had never before enjoyed the high honour of being a guest in any of those abodes. He could hardly call himself, with all his effrontery, a guest in Ulster Manor, yet he seemed to consider himself as such.

He eyed the richly-carved walls and chairs, the heavily draped and costly curtained windows, the splendid bed, the carpets, the tables, the mirrors, the whole lavish furniture of the apartment in general and in particular.

He made a rapid circuit of the room, something after the manner of a lean hound hunting for something to eat in a strange dining-room. He peeped, he spied, he touched, he looked, he wondered, and concluded by saying:

"I am in the Star Chamber, by Harry, and that is a good omen."

Mr. Hassan Wharfe, since he had resolved to press

his claims as heir of the rich baronetcy of Ulster, had assumed a feather and a sword.

"I shall make a good thing of it," he said, "if I can prove that I am the legal son and heir. The marriage? Oh, we can prove that, you know," eyeing himself in the mirror. "The thing is to prove that I am the offspring of that marriage. I am of the opinion that we can do that also, provided that the real son be dead, or do not press his claim. A very pretty plot as it stands, and I think we have the baronet right where we want him. He will have to come to terms. But I am troubled about the report that Hugh De Lisle escaped. Pity he was not shot, for I believe he was the true heir of Sir Alvick and—Aspa Jarles. But here comes a rap at my door. Come in."

The servant despatched by Roffton opened the door, and seemed somewhat startled by the very tall, lean personage before him.

"Now then!" squealed Mr. Hassan Wharfe.

"What are you staring at?"

The servant replied:

"Don't know, sir. Think it is a human being."

"Impertinent rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Wharfe. "I am the honoured guest of your master, Sir Alvick Ulster, and I will see that he has you ducked in the horse-pond—"

The mention of his master's name at once banished all merriment from the soul of the man, and he began to bow and scrape prodigiously.

"Beg pardon, sir—my lord?"

"No, I am not a lord—I am Mr. Hassan Wharfe, and do you find my two attendants in short order. Bring my luggage up, also."

The amazed servant hurried away, hardly able to say whether he ought to laugh or tremble, for there was something as evil as there was laughable in the appearance of Mr. Hassan Wharfe.

"When I am well settled in my rights," muttered Mr. Wharfe, as he coiled himself to await the appearance of his two attendants, "the first thing I shall do will be to find a flaw in that fellow's antecedents. I'll prove him to be a thief, a liar, a robber, a burglar, a murderer, and have him hanged for laughing at me. By George! no man shall crack a joke at those legs."

Here Mr. Hassan Wharfe uncoiled his legs, and gazed at them as if he thought them and their leanness the most captivating objects in the world.

He studied their spider-like proportions until the servant returned and ushered in those two persons who had excited the suspicions of old Ben Caton that they were "thief-catchers."

"Put my luggage in that corner," said Mr. Wharfe to the servant, "and send us up something hot and strong. Inform Lady Matilda that Mr. Hassan Wharfe may have the honour of paying his respects to her and her beautiful ward, Miss Evaline, if not to-night, most assuredly to-morrow. Do you hear?"

So saying, Mr. Wharfe seemed to uncoil all at once in every direction, while he hurled a candlestick, or rather a candlestick seemed to fly out from a mass of coils at the head of the servant, who hurried away with a lively idea that if Mr. Hassan Wharfe was not the devil himself, he was certainly nearer his idea of that dark and snaky personage than any biped or reptile he had ever seen.

The servant having departed, Mr. Wharfe bolted the door and turned to his two attendants, both of whom wore huge periwigs and coarse, loose, ill-fitting costumes, of the style usually worn in that day by tip-staves or constables.

Both appeared to be troubled with the toothache, or some affection of the mouth, for each had his face much muffled.

One was very tall, and wore a huge pair of green spectacles. The other was far below the medium stature.

As Mr. Wharfe turned towards them the taller of the two threw off his wig, his spectacles, and the muffler from his jaws, thereby revealing a rat-like visage, a large head—far too large for his sharp, lean, wrinkled face.

His gums were toothless, his nose and chin long and sharp, his eyes keen and brilliant, his age not more than sixty-six, though his face and his innumerable wrinkles made one imagine him twenty years older. But his step, his gestures firm and rapid, and the general tone of his frame, told of great physical strength and activity. He moved like a man in the prime of life, though his face was that of an octogenarian.

He has been mentioned in this story, and his name was Amos Jarles, grandfather of Mr. Hassan Wharfe, father of that mysterious Aspa Jarles so much dreaded by Sir Alvick Ulster.

(To be continued.)

KING THEODORE'S SON.—This youth is at present staying in the Isle of Wight with Captain Speedy.

He is to be brought up as the son of an English gentleman, with the view of his entering the Indian Civil Service.

In the churchyard of St. Paul, Cornwall, is a stone erected by Prince L. L. Bonaparte to the memory of Dorothy, or, as she was always called, "Dolly" Pentreath, who died in 1778, and is said to have been the last person who conversed in the ancient Cornish tongue.

MICHEL-DEVER.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CLAIRE regarded her brother silently for a few moments, and then said:

"You are a rare and noble man, Armand, and I ask your pardon sincerely for having so long thought unkindly of you. Circumstances drove me to you, or I should never have sought you out. Our father, who has passed beyond the veil, knows all now, and he understands how cruelly he misjudged you. If you had written to him after your return from China, he would have been reconciled to you, and have died happier."

"I did write. I sent my letter to London, as that was the last place from which news from him had been received. It was returned to me with assurances that all clue to my father was lost. In the obscure valley in which he had concealed himself it was impossible to trace him; yet he must have had means of knowing that I lived—that I was the possessor of wealth, for he told you so, and suffered you to believe that I would not minister to his wants from my abundance. I think that he would never apply to me for aid, or make known his condition to me, because he could not bear to receive anything from the son whose life he had so insanely attempted to destroy. I suppose that he also continued to believe that Josephine stood as an eternal barrier to our reunion."

"I do not know; he never referred to her in the meagre confidence he gave to me. Let us not discuss his motives now, brother: he has passed to a higher tribunal than that of earth, and the true and pure soul, in spite of all his faults, has met recognition among its peers."

"I believe it," said Latour, reverently, "and I cherish the memory of his early kindness to me with tender respect: the rest I shall bury in oblivion, and never speak of again. I should not have done so now, but to place myself in my true position before you."

"That will be best, Armand. But tell me one thing more, before the painful past is closed. Where is your wife? What has been her fate? Your words lead me to believe that you are aware of it."

Latour arose, and walked the floor several moments. Suddenly pausing, in a changed voice, he rapidly said:

"It is your right, and you shall know even that, humiliating as it is to me to reveal the utter unworthiness of one I have so blindly loved."

"For years I heard nothing of Josephine; I had almost ceased to think of her, when chance threw her on my path, in a dying condition. I told you that I travelled extensively, after I withdrew from active partnership in the bank. Towards the close of the summer of 18—, I was at Carlsbad, for the benefit of the waters. In the cottage nearest to the one I inhabited was an invalid lady, who was evidently in reduced circumstances. She had with her, temporarily, an old woman of the village as nurse, for she could afford no servant of her own."

"In passing I often saw the pale and shadowy form of the invalid, lying back in her large chair near the window, but it never occurred to me that this wasted, worn-out creature was the brilliant coquette who had won my heart only to crush it. Every vestige of the beauty that had enthralled me was gone; even the brilliant eyes that once had beamed on me with simulated tenderness had become hard, restless, and repelling in expression. The soul within had stamped itself upon the features, as its repulsive elements came into play through the life she had led—and a hollow-eyed, wrinkled hag met my view when I glanced towards her in passing."

"I turned from her with a feeling of loathing, without comprehending why this suffering creature did not appeal to my better feelings, as others in her condition always had done. I did not once dream that this wretched being was the idol I had once bowed blindly before, though some instinctive feeling caused me to recoil from her, as from the blighting presence of something that was fatal to me."

"After seeing her once I could not drive her evil face from me; it haunted me like an incubus, and I determined to leave the place to rid myself of the disagreeable influence of that woman's vicinity."

"Late on the evening before my departure, old Gretchen, her nurse, came into my cottage and abruptly said:

"Madame Blondeau wishes to see you before you go. She can't live many days longer, and she says you are an old acquaintance of hers, to whom she wishes to speak in private."

"I listened to this statement in the greatest astonishment.

"An acquaintance of mine," I said; "you must be mistaken. I have never known a person of that name."

"Oh! names don't signify, and she may not go by her true one. She knows you at any rate, for the first time she ever saw you pass her window she fell into a sort of spasm, and she has been getting worse every day since. Monsieur will not refuse to go to a dying woman, who may have some message to send back by him to her friends, for Madame Blondeau is a countrywoman of your own."

"Of course I will go to her," I replied, "and will do all that lies in my power for one so unfortunately situated as this lady seems to be. You can go back and tell her that I will come over in half an hour."

"Gretchen left me, and I vainly tried to remember when and where her charge had been known to me. I could not remember her, for not once did the suspicion dawn on me of the identity of that phantom with the woman who had deceived me."

"I went to the interview deeply mystified, wondering what service would be required at my hands. Gretchen ushered me into the comfortable-looking room, and closed the door, leaving me alone with the invalid, who was reclining, as usual, in her cushioned chair. The light was so placed that I could see but the outline of her attenuated figure as she lay back, panting for breath, and evidently greatly excited."

"I drew near her, more unmoved by her sufferings than I had thought it possible for me to be, in the presence of one in her condition; but the very atmosphere she breathed seemed to repel me and stiffen every emotion but that of curiosity, to know why I had been summoned into her presence. She did not speak, and I sat down on the chair to which she motioned me, and said:

"You have something to say to me, I understand, madam. Though I cannot remember where we have met before, I am quite ready to comply with any reasonable request you may have to make of me."

"In a hollow, harsh voice, unlike the seductive tones I remembered as the broken melody of my wrecked life, she gasped:

"*Mou Dieu!* he does not know me. Am I, indeed, so changed as that, Armand? Has no thrilling memory of the past come to enlighten you as to the identity of the unhappy woman before you?"

"My heart, before so calm, began to beat furiously. I started up, grasped the lamp, and held it above her head, eagerly scanning the pale, pinched features. I cried out:

"Who are you?—there is nothing about you that I recognize, yet your words point to the miserable tragedy of my life. Woman, are you all that is left of the Circe that enthralled but to betray me? Yet that is impossible."

"She held up her hand, on which glittered a curious ring set with a carbuncle cut in the shape of a heart, and surrounded by points of gold, in each one of which gleamed a tiny ruby. I had given that bauble to Josephine before our union, and she retained it, as she did all the costly presents I had made her. By that token alone I knew her, and I staggered from her side like a man smitten by lightning, and replaced the lamp upon the table from which I had taken it."

"Oh, the unutterable horror of that moment! I can never put it in words, nor will I attempt to do so. I felt faint and ill, and my first impulse was to rush from the room; but she grasped my arm with her talon-like hand, and held me in a clutch like that of death itself. She hoarsely said:

"You know me now, and should comprehend why I must speak with you before I die."

"I desperately said:

"I wish to hear nothing from you. You were once the curse of my life, but I have cast from me the memory of the past. You wish to evoke, and I will not stay to hear such confession as you may wish to make. It is of no interest to me. Die as you have so long lived, uncared for by me—less than nothing to me."

"In a cold tone, she replied:

"I expected nothing more from you than scorn and aversion. That does not wound me, for I never loved you. I did not send for you to speak of myself, but of the man who so cleverly compassed your ruin, and secured the wealth for which your father had so long laboured. Have you no desire to know where Bellair went? by what means he evaded those set upon his track? I can tell you that, and also enlighten you as to another wrong from him

that, through all these years, you have not suspected."

"I paused at those words, and said:

"If you can tell me that, I will listen to you—odious as your presence is to me. Where is Bellair now? What has become of him?"

"With a ghastly sneer, she said:

"I thought I could interest you before we parted. You never suspected that he had made ardent love to me, from the day you first brought him to my aunt's house; but he did, and I preferred him to you. I stifled my preference, for he was not rich, and you were, or I believed you to be. I knew that your father vehemently opposed our union; and fearful of losing the prize I thought I had won, I foolishly consented to a private marriage."

"A few days afterwards, Bellair came to me, showed me the ruin that was impending over you, and entreated me to break with you. He did not tell me that he intended to become the agent of that ruin, or how it was to be effected, but he implored me to free myself from you and consent to fly with him to some distant land, in which we could dwell together in luxury. He said that wealth had recently fallen to him which would realize my wildest dreams of splendour."

"When I told him of the tie that existed between us, I thought he would have gone mad with jealous fury. Bellair was older than I by many years, yet I loved him even as he loved me, and I pledged myself to go at his summons and leave the impoverished dupe, who would then have nothing more to bestow upon me."

"Bellair assured me that he had large sums securely invested, and I should reign as a queen in society, with every wish of my vain heart gratified to the utmost extent of his fortune. I agreed to all he proposed, for a life passed in poverty with you had no charms for me; but with him—ah! it was joy, happiness unutterable to think of the free, untrammelled future that opened before me shared with the man of my heart."

"I cared not how his wealth had been obtained, provided I shared it with him. You know what followed. The divorce I asked was granted; the small estate you had given me I was allowed to retain, and the proceeds of its sale I carried with me to swell the hoards I then knew that my lover had secured from the same coffers. Do you know why I was guilty of that baseness, Armand Latour?"

"I was too much stunned by this revelation to make any reply, and Josephine vindictively went on:

"That was my vengeance upon your father for his insulting objections to our union. I meant to ruin him utterly and hopelessly; as to you, you had youth and energy—you could reinstate yourself in time, but to him the blow was final."

"I found voice to ask:

"Whither did you go? Where did Bellair conceal himself till you joined him?"

"He went to Louisiana, where French society was to be found. There, under the assumed name of Blondeau, he purchased a fine plantation on the coast above New Orleans, which was highly improved. When I joined him six months later, I found him thoroughly settled and everything in readiness for my reception. We were married in the cathedral in New Orleans, and I went to the home he had prepared for me."

"For a few years I was happy, for I felt no remorse for the past and had no misgivings as to the future. I think I was born without a conscience, for even now, fallen as I am, I cannot regret the golden years purchased by my treachery to you. I led the gay and brilliant life for which I had always pined, and why should I regret the price paid for it by two men, one of whom had insulted me, and the other utterly indifferent to me? I did not send for you to prove that I have repented, for if it were to do over again, I should take the same course."

"I sternly asked:

"For what purpose then have you summoned me hither? I could have gone to my grave without hearing this revelation, and it was by no means necessary for you to exhibit any new proofs of your baseness. I have long comprehended that, and cast you down into the depths of contempt, so utterly that no vestige of my old madness remains. You have been scarcely a memory to me for years past."

"With a sneer she said:

"Yet you have never married again. Why was that, if I held no power over you?"

"I replied, "I had little time to think of women," I coldly replied. "For years my life was devoted to the duty I felt to be imperative upon me. The stolen money you revelled on I laboured to repay, that no stain might rest upon the honoured name of the parent I had been the cause of ruining. Then, my own fortune was to be made; since that was accomplished I have found contentment in travel and the resources of my own mind. With my experience of

one woman, I was not likely to shackle myself with any other. But what has brought you here alone, and evidently impoverished?"

"So you wish to hear the end of that glittering career?—to trace the steps by which I have fallen so low as to compel me to make an appeal to you, but of that presently."

"My husband was a gambler at heart. He not only risked and lost large sums at cards, but he speculated wildly, in the hope that the ruin he was bringing on himself might be averted. His schemes of aggrandizement only hastened his downfall, but we kept up our extravagant style of living for many years before the final crash came. Then he committed suicide, leaving me to bear what he had thus escaped from, as I best could."

"The dissipated life I had led had told on my beauty; I found myself widowed, old in appearance, and nearly penniless. A few thousand pounds were saved for me from the wreck of the estate, and I came back to Europe in search of the health I had lost. For five years I have wandered over this continent alone. My means have gradually dwindled down till I am nearly penniless. I am dying, as you see, and the small sum I have left will not pay the debts I have incurred here. This bauble might suffice to bury me, for it is curious and valuable. I sent for you to see if you would purchase it back, and thus afford me the means of a decent funeral."

"She took from her thin finger the engagement ring I had placed there so long ago, held it towards me, and with a hollow sneer went on:

"It was a strange fancy to select a thing like this for a *gage d'amour*. The rubies on the points are like drops of blood, and I have often thought how true an emblem they are of the anguish I have brought to you. A heart weeping blood—a curious choice for an engagement ring."

"Her voice sounded to me mocking and hard. I snatched the gem, threw it upon the floor, and ground it to powder beneath the heel of my boot. Then turning to her, I said:

"I understand now why I have been sent for. You knew that I would not leave the woman who once bore my name to be buried as a pauper, utterly unworthy as you are. But I will not give money to you. I will see the landlord and make arrangements to settle for what you may need, and to pay the expenses of a quiet funeral when you are dead. Now I will go, since I have no farther business here."

"Josephine calmly replied:

"That is all I require. Let me be comfortable as long as I live—that is all I ask now."

"As I turned away I said:

"I will send a priest to you, for you are not fit to die and go before your Maker in your present state of mind."

"With a hollow, mocking laugh, she said:

"It is too late for repentance now. My life has been given to the pursuit of pleasure, and heaven will not take the loss when the sparkling draught has been drained to the dregs, without a thought of him or his requirements. Besides, in heaven I should not meet my twin soul, my love, my tempter. In some lower abode prepared for such as he and I, will I join him and bear with him the penalty of our joint sins. Farewell, Armand; I do not ask your forgiveness, for I know it would be vain to do so."

"I fled from the room and closed the door after me. I will not attempt to describe to you the whirl of feeling in which the hours of that long night were passed. I did not leave Carlsbad with the dawn, as I intended, for I was too ill in mind and body to travel."

"For three days I remained in my room, and every evening Gretchen came, unbidden, to let me know how rapidly her charge was sinking. I would have got away if I could, but some horrible spell seemed to bind me to the spot. I sent for the landlord, and arranged with him what was to be done for the comfort of the sick woman, and everything she needed was provided for at my expense."

"On the third night after our interview she passed away; and I remained till the grave closed over her, though I did not follow her to it."

Latour sat down as if exhausted by this painful recital, and it was several moments before either spoke. Claire then said:

"Let us never refer to that dreadful woman again, Armand. I am glad that you have told me about her, for your conduct to her proves to me that you have been true to yourself through all your trials. Oh, how much I wish that I was more like you, but our natures are different. You returned good for evil, while I—I think of nothing but paying back wrong for wrong."

Latour gently replied:

"My dear Claire, I will try to make you happy in your new sphere, and that will take the sting from the past. The wrong you have suffered was great, but you can put even that aside, and in time

almost forget it. A worthless man should not have the power to darken your whole life."

"I will never breathe her name again, Armand. Thank you for the confidence you have given me, for it has taught me how worthy of affectionate reverence you are."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE brother and sister descended the winding-stairs, and regained the more modern portion of the building.

A luxuriously appointed sleeping-room opened from the saloon, and the door was thrown back, revealing a carpet of a delicate white ground, sprinkled over with bouquets of brilliant flowers. A carved table in the centre of the floor supported the lamp of antique fashion, in which burned perfume-bowl. Beside it was a tray on which was fruit, wine, and light, crisp biscuits.

Curtains, richly embroidered, floated from the open windows, and in an alcove was a bed draped with snowy linen. A damask-covered sofa was between the windows, and a carved *armoire* with oval mirrors set in the doors, occupied a recess similar to that in which the bed stood. A dressing-table, and several easy-chairs of different shapes, completed the furnishing of this charming apartment.

Latour led his sister forward, and said:

"This is yours as long as you choose to occupy it, Claire. It communicates with the smoking-room, and to-morrow, if you wish it, that shall be converted into a boudoir for the reception of such visitors as you may wish to receive."

"Dear brother, you are too good. How shall I ever repay you for what you are so ready to do for me? I cannot consent to turn you out of your own sanctum."

"I prefer the tower room to any in the house, and I seldom remain long in any other when I am here. As to repaying, Claire, it is I who must do that to you. I have transferred to you the heavy debt I owed my father, which should so long ago have been settled. Only love me a little, my sister; that is all the return I shall ask. Let me make your path bright and easy to travel, and I shall feel as if the toil of my life has not been in vain. My wealth, beyond the leisure it affords me to follow my own pursuits, and the power it gives me to aid others, is of little value to me. In the excitement of accumulating it, I could bury the past, but once won, I found it powerless to purchase forgetfulness or happiness. Accept all I may lavish on you as your right, and say nothing of gratitude. I do not care to receive any other return than to see you enjoy the luxury it will be my greatest pleasure to afford you."

Claire threw herself upon his breast, and, for the first time, caressed him fondly. Latour, gravely returned the kisses she lavished on him, and smiling faintly, said:

"It is so long since a woman's arms encircled my neck, that I scarcely know how to comport myself under such novel circumstances. Here is wine; let me drink to you, my fair housekeeper, with the hope that here you will find peace and perfect content."

He filled two small goblets with the clear, sparkling liquid, and gracefully offering one to Claire, clinked the edge of his own against it.

"If I do not, it will be my own fault," cried Claire. "I am not fond of wine, but I will drink this in honour of the gentle and true heart that prompted your words."

When they had replaced the goblets, Latour said:

"I will send Zolande to you to act as your attendant, but to-morrow I will see that a more suitable maid is provided for you. You must sleep to-night, for at an early hour in the morning we must go together to Mrs. Courtney, and let her see that you have fallen into better hands than either she or you hoped."

"Yes, I shall sleep, I know, although I have passed through so much excitement during the last hours. Fate is kind to send me so charming a home, just as the one I have lately shared must have been closed to me. Good night, brother; put aside all sad memories, and welcome the new era that dawns for us both from this hour."

"I will make an effort to do so, Claire. Dream pleasant dreams, my fair sister, and feel assured that if it be within the compass of my ability to realize them, I will do so."

"Thanks. I believe that you will prove better than a fairy-godmother to me," was the laughing rejoinder, and Latour left the room.

Zolande presently came in, full of curiosity as to the past life of her young mistress, but Claire was not disposed to gratify it. She briefly gave such facts as it was well for her brother's household to know, and dismissed the inquisitive old woman as

soon as possible, that she might think over alone the strange events of the afternoon.

She felt towards her brother as if she had known him all her life, for his resemblance to her father was so great that it took away all sense of strangeness from him. Claire deeply regretted that they should have so misunderstood each other, and she sighed as she thought it was the same spirit of retaliation which ruled herself that had so long kept them apart. Bitter and resentful natures they all had; then why should she be held accountable for the tenacity with which she cherished her own scheme of retribution?

Claire gazed long and earnestly upon the image reflected in the large mirror before which she sat, wondering if that brilliant face could ever fade, that gay youthfulness of aspect lose its charm, for it seems very difficult to the young to realize that the passage of a few fleeting years must rob them of that which is so precious to themselves, so attractive to others.

At eight o'clock Zolande came in to see if she were awake, and offered her services to assist at her toilette. But Claire desired her to return to her household duties, declaring that she needed no attendant, and was accustomed to wait upon herself.

When she entered the breakfast room, she found her brother waiting to receive her, and after the morning salutations he said:

"I thought to have tangible evidence that all that passed last night was not a dream. Away from you, Claire, I find it difficult to realize that I have a charming sister, young enough to be my daughter, who will give an interest to my lonely life which it has long wanted."

Claire smilingly replied:

"Remember that you like me, Armand. I intend to render myself necessary to you for the future, and I think we can be very happy together."

Zolande came in, bringing her waiter, and an exquisite little breakfast was soon served in a style of luxury with which the young housekeeper was enchanted.

Fresh flowers adorned the table, and most tempting fruits in silver baskets lined with fresh leaves and moss, were placed among the more substantial edibles. Coffee of most delicious aroma was poured into the porcelain cups, and Claire sipped hers, declaring it was far better than nectar; delicate French rolls and rice cakes, with game, completed the repast.

"I declare, brother, you are a perfect sybarite," she laughingly declared, as she arose from the table. "Who would have expected to find such a *manège* in this dilapidated-looking tower?"

"I believe I understand comfort, a thing the English declare peculiar to themselves," said Latour. "I sojourned long enough in *perfidie* Albion, as my countrymen are fond of calling it, to learn something from its people, which I have since turned to advantage. Latour is almost a ruin, as you say, but now that I have somebody to plan and decorate for, I shall send workmen hither to renovate the old place, but that shall not be done till you take possession of my town house and queen it there. I have ordered the carriage, and we had better go to visit Mrs. Courtney as soon as possible. She must be uneasy about you, though I sent a note to her last night explaining, as well as I could, what had happened to throw you under my protection in so unexpected a manner."

"That was very kind and thoughtful of you, Armand, and I thank you for it with all my heart. I can be ready to set out in a few moments, and I am most impatient to present you to mamma, and tell her how much at home I feel with you already."

Claire went to her room, and shortly returned equipped for the drive.

A handsome barouche was drawn up in front of the entrance, to which was harnessed a pair of magnificent bays; a footman in livery stood at their heads, while M. Latour handed in his sister, and placed himself beside her. He took the reins himself, and in a few moments they were whirling rapidly towards Paris.

The morning was deliciously clear and soft, and Claire found her brother a most agreeable companion. In less than an hour she was at Mrs. Courtney's lodgings, and Julia came flying to the door to welcome her, exclaiming:

"I have been watching for you all the morning. Oh! Claire, how could you stay away all night? Mamma had a long talk with Andrew when he came back without you, but she only told me that you had found your brother."

"Andrew is here then," said Claire, glad to find that he had performed his promise to return and explain to his mother what had occurred.

"Yes—he is here, but I have not seen him. He has shut himself up in his room, and will not let me in. This is M. Latour, I suppose. He is very good-

looking, but I shan't like him if he takes you away from us."

With his winning smile Latour held out his hand to the little girl, and said:

"I mean to make you like me, *petite*, even if I do rob you of your friend, Claire. She belongs to me, you know, but I do not intend to ask her to give up her old loves entirely. You and your mother shall come to me, and we will have a good time together before we talk of parting."

With the frank confidence of childhood, Julia gave him her hand, and led him towards the reception-room, but he contrived to detain her a few moments on the way, while Claire flitted past them and sought Mrs. Courtney.

She found her looking extremely pale, but perfectly composed after the severe trial through which she had passed.

She faintly said:

"Thank heaven, you are safe, my child! but I tremble to think what the result might have been, if that madman had carried out his treacherous plans. He came back to me, told me all, and implored my forgiveness. But oh, Claire, it was a terrible blow to me to discover that he had so long and systematically deceived me."

"Think no more of it, dearest mamma. Andrew knows now that under no possible contingency would I become his wife, and that will work a complete cure sooner than anything else. It was most fortunate that he did not know to whose grounds the cottage he took me to belonged, or I might have been compelled to go with him on the tour he had planned. But even in that case I should have brought him back to you before very long, with his illusions dispelled, and ready to let me go on my own terms."

Mrs. Courtney sighed heavily.

"I think he understands, at last, that there can be no hope for him. I shall get him back to England as soon as possible; it is the best thing I can do to remove him as far as possible from you. But where is M. Latour? He came in with you, I suppose?"

"Yes; he lingered in the hall with Julia a few moments, to allow me to speak with you before presenting himself. Oh, mamma, Armand is good and noble, and it was most unfortunate that he and my father did not better understand each other. He has explained all that to me entirely to my satisfaction: you will like him, and do justice to him when you know him, I am sure."

The door was thrown open, and M. Latour entered, followed by Julia. He advanced and took the extended hand of Mrs. Courtney with a grace that impressed her very favourably. He bowed deferentially, as he said:

"I do not require an introduction to the friend of my father and the maternal protectress of my sister. Mrs. Courtney, I can never sufficiently thank you for all your past kindness to those I would gladly have aided myself, if I had been permitted to do so."

"Now that I see you face to face, M. Latour, I cannot doubt that," she replied. "You are so strikingly like your father in person, that I feel assured you must possess the same honourable traits of mind and heart. Claire tells me that all has been explained between you, and I accept her assurance that it is as it should be. You owe me nothing, I assure you; for the assistance your father rendered me in many ways, after my husband's death, more than repaid me for the little he would accept at my hands. To care for his child as he had cared for mine, was a sacred duty which I have found much pleasure in fulfilling. If that had not been so, the service you did me yesterday afternoon, in saving my son from an act which he must bitterly have repented, would more than repay me for all I have done."

"It was fortunate that I returned home just at this crisis," Latour briefly replied; "so let us say no more on that painful subject."

"I received your note last night, and was pleased with the thoughtful kindness which induced you to send it. I was not quite reassured concerning Claire till I read it, for Andrew was not in a condition to give a very clear account of what had taken place. He is, however, calmer this morning, and I hope, in a fair way to regain his sober senses."

"I am glad to hear that. It was a youthful folly, which must be forgiven in consideration of the temptation constantly before Mr. Courtney. I will in future relieve you from all care on my sister's account, by taking her under my own protection, and thus remove her from the vicinity of your son. Absence will soon complete his cure, for a man rarely clings to one who showed such anxiety to escape from him, as Claire did yesterday, when I came upon them in so unexpected a manner."

Julia drew near to Claire, and anxiously whispered: "What did Andrew do? I think I ought to know too."



[A FAREWELL INTERVIEW.]

"Well, pet, if you will be very prudent and say nothing about it, I will tell you," replied Claire, in the same tone.

"I'll not say one word, but I'm dying to know all about it."

"It would be a pity to let you die, so I will tell you that Andrew wanted me to marry him—that was all."

"Well, why wouldn't you? I'm sure I would rather have you for my sister than Cousin Emma. Besides, I heard somebody say that cousins ought not to marry."

"But your brother is engaged to Emma, and he must keep his pledge. She is only a distant cousin, and not so nearly related as to make the match objectionable. I can't marry him, because I do not love him well enough."

"I think you might, when you know how much we all think of you. But I suppose you had rather stay with your brother, and have everything your own way. Andrew wouldn't let you have that, for he makes me do just as he pleases."

While this whispered colloquy was carried on, Mrs. Courtney and her guests were engaged in earnest conversation, on which Claire was unwilling to intrude, so she lured Julia to a distant window, and watched the passers-by until her brother recalled her to his side.

M. Latour then said:

"I have been urging Mrs. Courtney to give up her lodgings in town, and spend the remainder of her time in France at Latour with us. She tells me that her son intends to set out for Baden this evening, to pass the rest of the season there. Under these circumstances, I can see no reason why she shall not be our guest. Join your entreaties with mine, Claire, to induce her to consent."

Claire turned eagerly to her friend, and exclaimed:

"Dear mamma, when you know how happy such a visit will make me, I know you will come. My brother could have thought of nothing that would afford me so much pleasure as to have you and Julia with me in my own home. You cannot say no, for I feel that I have the right to claim you."

With a smile, Mrs. Courtney replied:

"You have no cause to urge your claims so vehemently, my dear, for I shall be as happy to see you in your new sphere as you can be to have me with you. But Julia's masters attend her daily, and in the brief time I shall remain, I wish her to profit by their instructions as much as possible. How then can I remove to the country?"

"Latour is but a few miles from the city, and I

will promise to bring Mademoiselle Julia every day to my town house to receive her masters," said Latour. "It is really too warm to linger in Paris at this season of the year, and if I were permitted to offer my advice, I should say that fresh air and exercise will be better for your daughter, madam, than confinement to study. She has time enough before her, without burdening her with accomplishments just now."

Julia grasped his hand, and warmly pressed it.

"What a dear good man you are, M. Latour, to petition for freedom for me for a little while. I am dying for a romp upon the grass and a good run under the trees. You don't know what a weary wilderness of bricks and mortar this great city is to me. I go to the boulevards and parks, but they are filled with people, and they are not like the country I have been used to. Oh, mamma, if you will only let me put books aside for the next few weeks, and stay with Claire, I shall be the happiest girl alive."

"Do you really feel as if you need relaxation, Julia? You have not complained of being over-taxed, or I should have permitted you to lay aside your studies during the warm weather. Anxious as I am for your improvement, your health is of far more importance to me."

Julia laughed gleefully.

"I am not going to be ill, mamma, so have no fears on my account. I am only tired and stupid; the holiday M. Latour proposes to give me will quite set me up, and give me new energy to pursue my studies when I commence them again. I know that you cannot stay here after Claire and Andrew have both left us, with nobody but me for a companion; so be a dear, sweet mother, and say yes at once."

Mrs. Courtney smiled, and said:

"With three against me, of course there is no alternative but to yield as gracefully as possible. I accept your invitation very willingly, I assure you, M. Latour; before I leave my adopted child, I wish to see her settled in her new home, and become well acquainted with the protector to whose care I must surrender her."

"Thank you, dear madam, for so kindly acceding to my request. I will now leave my sister with you for a few hours, while I call at the bank, and also attend to some other business that claims my care. During my long absence, my town residence has been closed, but now that I have a fair mistress to preside over it, I must give orders to have it thoroughly refitted in a style of elegance commensurate with the importance to me of the lady who is to reign over it. If I can induce you to spend the

coming winter with Claire, I shall be very glad, for she is too young and attractive to be launched in the gay world without a maternal adviser near her."

Mrs. Courtney shook her head.

"I scarcely think that I can delay my departure so long, deeply as I am interested in Claire's future."

"We will leave the question open for future discussion," said Latour, bowing over her hand, "and I will not despair of yet inducing you to prolong your residence in France. *Au revoir, madame.*"

"Return in time to take luncheon with us, monsieur, and then we can arrange our plans."

"Thanks! I will do so, and reclaim my treasure-trove, for I cannot part from Claire so soon after finding her."

M. Latour left the room, and Mrs. Courtney turned to Claire, and said:

"Your brother is a sad-looking man, but a most interesting one, my dear. If, without violating confidence, you can explain to me the cause of his estrangement from your father, I shall be glad to know it."

"I will tell you his painful story, mamma, for I think it but justice to Armand to do so. He did not prohibit me from repeating to you what he related to me, and I am sure he wishes you to understand that he was not entirely to blame. If my poor father would only have written to him, all could have been set right between them; but in this world people seldom understand each other."

"Come with me to my room, and do you go to the piano, Julia. Your music-master will soon be here, and you must be ready to receive him."

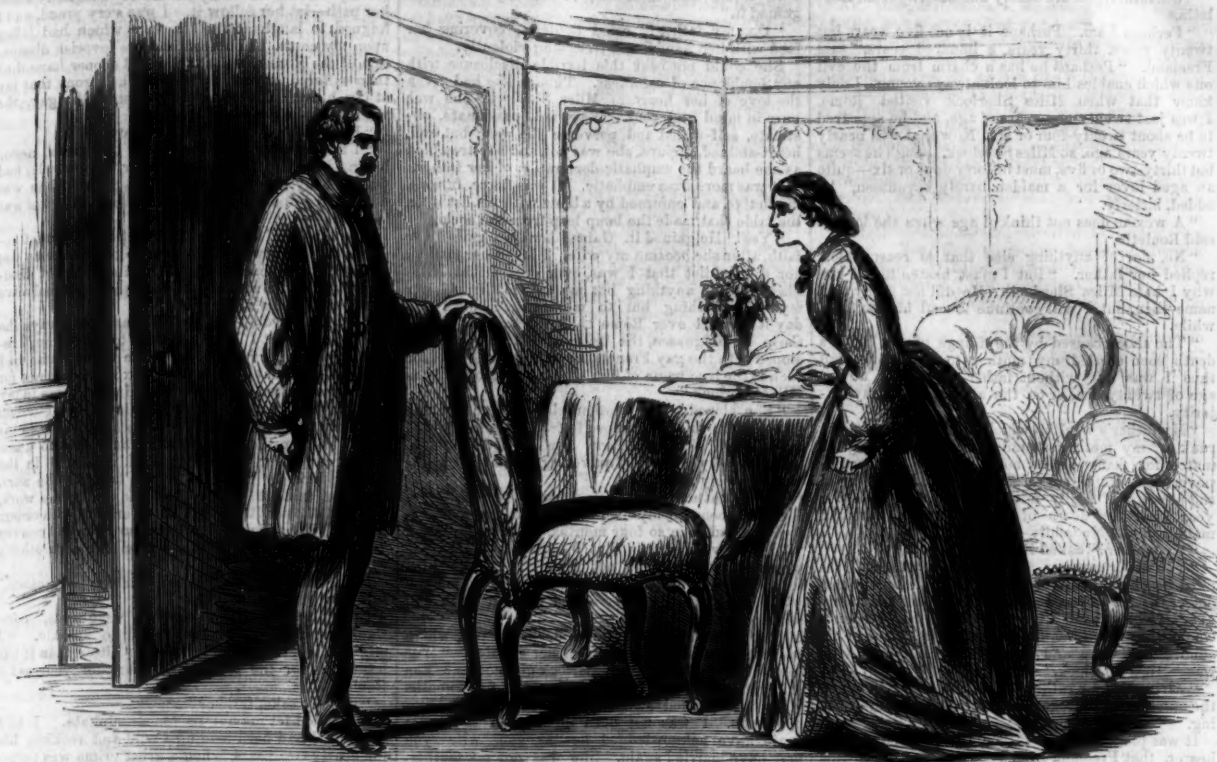
Very reluctantly was this command obeyed, for Julia had the curiosity of a child of her years, and was most eager to know all that could be told her of her new friend.

On entering her apartment, Mrs. Courtney said to her companion:

"Remain here a few moments, my dear, while I go to Andrew and tell him that you are here. He is most anxious to see you for a short time, that he may implore pardon for the outrage of which he has been guilty. I will return to you presently, and while you give me the history you have promised, Andrew can prepare himself for the interview I have guaranteed shall be granted him. You will not refuse this last request from my poor penitent boy, I hope?"

"No; I could refuse nothing asked of me by you, mamma, and I wish to see Andrew once more before we finally part. Say as much to him from me, if you please."

(To be continued.)



[A REVELATION.]

COPPER AND GOLD.

CHAPTER XVII.

We must now return to the blacksmith's cottage, which we left as Harry Freeland exclaimed:

"It is as I feared. Someone is hunting me down!"

With these mysterious words, he bowed his head upon his breast, and stared vacantly at the carpet.

Rouletta was amazed, both by the speech and the changed aspect of her father. Never before had she seen his rugged, resolute face so vividly painted with despair.

She had not so much as suspected that he had lived for many a year under a great load of apprehension, that some portion of his earlier life would some day fly into his face and beat him down.

She had never suspected that his heart held, with ever-trembling tenacity, two profound and important secrets—one relating to himself, and the other to her.

His generosity and pride had expended the greater portion of his hard earnings upon her education and her desires, reasonable and unreasonable; and this education had led her to regard him as a kind, rude, boisterous man, rough in speech, rough in his habits, careless of the future as of the past; and she often wished that she could love him as she saw others love their fathers, or that he had not given her an education which caused her to regard him as her inferior.

No doubt that his frequent outbursts of passion had tintured her character with some of his own violent traits; for by nature she was gentle, though firm; forgiving, though easily aroused to anger and obstinacy.

She was amazed at his speech and air, and, as he stared so strangely at vacancy, placed her hand upon his, and said, gently:

"Father, forgive me! It is true that I love Miles Sherlock, and in that note he asked me to elope with him. Be frank with me, and tell me why you hate him so bitterly. Perhaps, had you told me when I first became acquainted with him, I would not have loved him as I do. But you gave me no reason why I should not so much as exchange a glance with him."

"You forget, Rouletta," interrupted Freeland, rousing himself with an effort—"you and he had been acquainted for days, yes, for weeks, before I knew that he was in England, or, as for that matter, knew that he lived. You say that in the note he asked you to elope with him; at what time?"

"To-night."

"To-night!" exclaimed Freeland. "Has it gone so far as that? But I have promised not to be violent. Answer me, child. You will not tell a falsehood, even for him—would you have eloped with him?"

"Perhaps I would. I do not know."

"Have I not been a kind and loving father, Rouletta?"

She had never heard him speak so softly and sadly before. The harshness of his voice had disappeared as if by magic.

"Oh, you have been too kind, father!" she replied. "You have spoiled me."

"Perhaps I have. Heaven knows that I meant it all for the best, Rouletta. Perhaps had I not given you so many teachers, so much education, you would have loved me more. I used to half fear that in learning so much you might learn to despise your father, who was forced to appear boorish and uneducated. But I am going to tell you why I hate this man who calls himself Miles Sherlock, and if after that you think him worthy of your love, I may tell you more."

"I am a native of Rome," he began, speaking in Italian, with a smoothness and correctness which astonished his daughter, who had no suspicion that he knew a word of that language.

She knew that he was familiar with English, French and German—that he spoke only the first correctly, and even interlarded that with harsh and inelegant phrases, from which her educated ear had often recoiled. Yet she, as did all his acquaintances, supposed him to be of the lower order.

Her education and unusual faculty for learning languages had made her, as he had boasted to the Arabian, an accomplished linguist, and she started with unqualified surprise as her supposed uneducated father, the rude blacksmith, spoke not simply Italian, but spoke it with an ease and accent as pure and perfect as those of her Italian professor, who had been a man of rank in Italy, but exiled for his political opinions.

"I am a native of Rome," he said, smiling a little at her surprise. "My father was an Englishman, a native of London, and my mother a Roman lady. Her family, noble, proud, and impoverished, as many a noble Roman family is, readily consented to her marriage with a wealthy Englishman upon one condition, and that was that he should discard his simple name, and assume that of their family."

"My father, devotedly in love with the beauty of my mother, consented, and thus the name of Charles Allison disappeared, and its rightful owner became

Carlo Di Magnasco—and such is my true name. Let what may happen, Rouletta, I warn you not to reveal to any one this fact."

"I will regard all that you are telling me as a sacred secret," replied Rouletta, warmly. "Then my name is not Rouletta Freeland, but Rouletta Di Magnasco?" she added, feeling a thrill of pleasure at the discovery, so unexpected, that she had "noble blood" in her veins.

Freeland shook his head, and replied, proudly:

"I have made my assumed name as noble for honesty, industry and upright dealing with all, as ever any of my mother's ancestors made theirs noble, by retaining by force the rank and riches they had gained by violence and oppression—for what do the rank and titles of nobility prove except that their possessors, or the ancestors of their possessors, at some time violently assumed to be superior to their fellows, and wrested from them equal rights. Be proud, Rouletta, of any name which, though humble, belongs to an honest and worthy man."

"But go on with your history, father," said Rouletta, not admiring the turn of the conversation.

"The marriage of my father and mother was happy, and as but one child was born to them, they seemed to centre all their hopes upon that one."

"My father possessed, as I said, great wealth, much of it being real estate, but as events have made it, I do not know what has become of that property."

"When I was quite young—at least not more than twenty years old, and now I am over forty—my father left Italy to visit England on business connected with his property there."

"He never returned. He was found dead in his bed in an hotel in London, as we were informed by letters from someone who appeared to have been his friend. Would you know who that man was?"

"Not Miles Sherlock?" said Rouletta.

"Yes, Miles Sherlock, as he calls himself. But Miles Sherlock has not recognized in Harry Freeland the gay young noble of Rome to whom he wrote of the death of Carlo di Magnasco, and to whom he afterwards brought the few personal effects found with my father's dead body."

"Then Miles Sherlock must be much older than thirty-five," remarked Rouletta.

"Did he tell you that he was but thirty-five?"

"Yes, and indeed he appears even younger."

"The evil one has aided him to preserve his youth so long," said Freeland, bitterly. "See my hair and beard are gray; men take me to be sometimes nearly sixty, very often more than fifty, yet I am five years younger than Miles Sherlock."

"Oh, father, you are surely mistaken!" cried Rouletta.

"Perhaps I am. Perhaps it is not five years but twenty years, thirty years, a hundred years," said Freeland. "Perhaps he has a charm from the evil one which enables him to look always young. I only know that when Miles Sherlock visited Rome, I was just twenty-one years of age, and he appeared to be about twenty-four or six. Now that was nearly twenty years ago, so Miles Sherlock, though he seems but thirty-two or five, must be forty-four or six—quite an aged lover for a maiden barely seventeen," he added, bitterly.

"A woman does not think of age when she loves," said Rouletta.

"No, nor of anything else that is reasonable," replied her father. "But I must hasten to tell you why I hate Miles Sherlock. He did not go by that name then, but I will continue to call him so for a while.

"The shock caused by the tidings of my father's death soon carried my mother to her grave, and thus I was left without father or mother at the age of twenty-one, or on the attainment of my majority.

"My father's wealth, which I inherited, and the rank of my mother's family, made me an eligible match for many of the noble and wealthy, or impoverished daughters of Rome. And, yielding to the pressure of family advice, I married, within a year after the death of my mother, a beautiful maiden of a noble family—the Countess.

"My mother?" asked Rouletta.

"You never saw her as you can remember," replied Freeland, evasively, though Rouletta did not detect it. "She was very beautiful, and had many admirers before and after. I became her husband. One of those who was first, chief, most ardent in his admiration before and after she became my wife, was—Miles Sherlock."

"Ah!" cried, or rather sighed, Rouletta, to whom the narrative now began to grow intensely interesting.

It was plain to her, as it would have been to any hearer, that Freeland was speaking truths—truths most bitter upon his tongue, most painful to his heart.

His face had become very pale, his voice trembled, and there was a look in his eye which told of the fierce emotions at work in his soul.

"Yes," he said, "Miles Sherlock—this man who asked you to elope with him—sought the love of my wife before she became my wife. He sought the love of my wife after she became my wife. At that time he feigned to be my friend—at that time he himself was married."

"Married!" exclaimed Rouletta, aghast. "He has been married? He swore to me that he had never loved a woman until he saw me!"

Freeland smiled a sad, compassionate smile, and said:

"Rouletta, were that falsehood his only sin, he would be as an angel of light to what he really is. You remember the woman whose face terrified you six years ago in the Place d'Armes?"

"Yes," replied she, shuddering.

"You recognized the face which peered in at that window, not an hour ago, as the face of that woman?"

"Oh, yes! Once seen, who could forget that face."

"That face belongs to one who was once the wife of Miles Sherlock," said Freeland, firmly.

"Great heaven! can all this be true!" exclaimed Rouletta. "That corpse-like, fendish face ever beloved by him whom I have loved!"

"Yes, I swear it. But that face was once handsome, beautiful," said Freeland. "That face appeared to me at my smithy, not many days ago, and I did not recognize it. The fact that its owner was one whom I knew years ago did not stare me in the eyes as her eyes did, but now, until I had resolved to tell you why I hate Miles Sherlock. For days and weeks I have tried to remember those eyes, for there seemed something in their expression which I had seen before. I could not remember, and yet I have a good memory, until just now—the truth. I know it—flashed into my mind. The owner of that face was Judith Atmonds, the divorced wife of Miles Sherlock, daughter of that man who now calls himself Carrol Glenville."

"What! The daughter of the father of Hermione Glenville?"

"He says Hermione is his daughter. Perhaps she is. I do not know," replied Freeland. "I only know that the owner of that face which terrified you and me, and angered the Arabian within this last hour, is Judith, once wife of Miles Sherlock; and that he who calls himself Carrol Glenville is her father, and that his true name is Jacob Atmonds. But listen. I said that Miles Sherlock sought the love of my

wife before and after she became my wife. He gained it."

"Oh, my father!" cried Rouletta, covering her face with her hands, and trembling violently.

She could not bear this terrible disclosure with any semblance of calmness. Though she had given the love of her heart to Miles Sherlock, she was pure in mind and soul. Wayward, passionate, obstinate, self-willed and perverse she was; but evil, heart-stained, impure, she was not, and she trembled as she heard the emphatic declaration of her father.

It was more than emphatic. It was fierce, furious, vindictive, and enforced by a blow with his fist upon the table that made the lamp leap from the socket.

"Yes! He gained it. Gained her love, gained her faith, after she became my wife. I loved her madly; nor did I, idiot that I was, ever dream that Miles Sherlock was anything but my devoted friend, nor my wife anything but to me devoted, until one day it was all over Rome that the wife of young Carlo Di Magnasco, the bride of four months, had eloped with the gay Frenchman, Kingston Boyne, for such is the true name of him whom you know only as Miles Sherlock."

"She eloped! My mother eloped from you, my father, with this man whose letter, this night, urged me to elope with and marry him!" cried Rouletta, with lips ashy white, and quivering so that her words were scarcely audible.

"Yes, that man—that same man whose miniature I ground beneath my heel shortly with my wife, before she had been so four months," replied Freeland. "Do you wonder now that I hate him? Do you wonder now that I do not wish you to love him, to speak to him, to look upon him, except as you would look upon a thief called in your path and seeking in his victim?"

"Stop!" said Rouletta, in a deep whisper, which proved the startling intensity of her emotion. "Was she who eloped with Miles Sherlock my mother? You said you and she had not been wedded four months when it happened—when the fearful disgrace came upon you. I was not born then. How could I again have acknowledged her as your wife—you may have married again. She was not my mother, was she?"

"I never married another. I never saw her after she eloped with him. I did not even seek to see her again," replied Freeland, with haughty contempt.

"And such a woman was my mother!" ejaculated Rouletta, pale, trembling, crushed.

"Your mother eloped from a home in which she was worshipped—eloped with Miles Sherlock!" said Freeland, firmly.

"And I was about to repeat my mother's act!" exclaimed Rouletta, clapping her hands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FREELAND passed a moment, and gazed upon the pallid, horror-stricken face before him.

"You now know why I hate Miles Sherlock," he said, at length, hoarsely. "You now understand why I bade you detest him."

"Yes," replied Rouletta, whose hands and limbs had grown cold, and almost lifeless. "I now know why you hated him. I now hate him too, for I know you are not deceiving me. Ah, you could not be so cruel, my father!"

"To spare you a life of misery, a life of infamy, or a suicide's death, I have told you the truth," replied Freeland. "But you have not heard all—"

"I have heard enough to change my love into hate," cried Rouletta, bursting into tears. "I only wonder that you did not stab him when you met him."

"I did not do so because—well, I may tell you why I did not stab him. But it is necessary that you should hear more. The injuries of this man did not stop with robbing me of my wife. Ah, he has the heart and malice of a fiend! It is strange evil men hate those whom they have wronged as much—nay, I believe, more than they hate those who have wronged them. So this wretch hated me, for he was all bad, all evil. It is said that no man can be so bad that he has not a single redeeming trait in his character. This may be true, for even Miles Sherlock had, or feigned to have, some good qualities—that is, he was brave, generous with his gold, but perhaps generous only to attain some evil purpose."

Rouletta seemed stunned by all that she had heard. Her beautiful face, pallid, rigid, expressed the heart-anguish no tongue could speak. She was contemplating, even while listening to her father, the abyss of shame, of remorse, into which she had been upon the point of plunging.

"Oh, father," she whispered, for her voice could not at the moment rise higher, "I never thought man could be so base."

"Listen. I have told you that I did not seek to

see my wife again. Why should I? She had chosen her path—let her follow it. I was very proud, and I feigned to laugh at the disgrace which had fallen upon my name. I plunged into the feverish dissipation of the Roman capital. I would sooner have died than suffered anyone to surmise the agony that lay at my heart. I became the gayest of the gay, the wildest of the reckless."

"Poor father!" murmured Rouletta.

"I had gone on thus for nearly two years, never having heard of Miles Sherlock or of her who had deserted my bosom for his, when a great crime was perpetrated upon the streets of Rome. A priest was stabbed—"

"But, father," interrupted Rouletta, "I cannot understand how it was that a man so passionate as you are could have remained in Rome, in a whirl of dissipation, while he who had injured you remained alive to triumph in his villany."

"I will tell you, Rouletta. I was not always the violent man that I have appeared to be to you," replied Freeland. "I so scorned the woman who had betrayed me, that I felt nothing except contempt for the man who had betrayed her. Had he come in my way, I would have rejoiced to slay him—I would certainly have attempted to place my dagger in his heart. But rather than suffer the world to know that I cared for my disgrace, I remained in the city, apparently forgetful of my injury. Be sure, however, that I had those well-adapted to the work, waiting all over Italy for Miles Sherlock, with orders from me, if they found him, to capture him and convey him to where he and I might gaze into each other's eyes before he died."

"Ah, then you desired no common vengeance," said Rouletta.

"No, nor have I taken common vengeance," continued Freeland, as his eyes began to sparkle. "I might make my vengeance more bitter than it has been, only for the sake of another—for your sake, Rouletta."

"For my sake, father?"

"Yes, but let me not be too precipitate. I told you that I had been leading a wild and reckless life for nearly two years, when a great crime was perpetrated in the streets of Rome. A priest was stabbed as he came out of a church. I was arrested for that crime. I was tried, convicted, and condemned."

"Great heavens! You, my father," cried Rouletta.

"Yes. Condemned to death—to be broken on the wheel. I, the representative of a noble family, was condemned to an infamous death, a death decreed only to the most hardened criminals, to brigands, to robbers, to assassins," replied Freeland, as his lips grew white with rage. "Fate had not blighted my name, my life, my ambition enough in disgracing me, all through my wife. That disgrace, bitter and deep as it was, was through another, by no act, nor desire of mine. But the assassination of the priest, or rather the attempted assassination—for I believe he survived—was placed upon me; and, as I am a living man, I did not do it."

"Did you have a fair trial?"

"Wait, I will tell you how the priest was stabbed—who could tell better, since the hilt of the dagger as he was stabbed was in my hand. I was standing in the vestibule of the church as the priest forced his way through the crowd. I gave way before him. He had passed me almost, was by my side when, with the quickness of light, the hilt of a dagger was thrust into my hand, my fingers pressed down upon with irresistible force, my hand and arm raised, plunged forward, and the dagger buried in the breast of the priest. It was all done in an instant, so quickly that all was over in a second, and the same instant a voice shouted, 'Magnasco has killed Father Antelmo!'

"I saw the priest cast a look of horror into my face; his hand seized my own while yet it was upon the hilt of the dagger; he fell, dragging me down with him."

"I was seized by a score of hands, for the priest was a popular man, beloved by all, and I was known to be reckless."

"I was cast into a dungeon, and my trial was speedy. No doubt I had a fair and just trial, but there were several who swore that they saw my hand on the hilt of the dagger while its blade was in the breast of the priest. The dagger, too, was mine. I could not deny it, for my name was upon it, and its sheath was in my belt when I was arrested. Of course I was convicted and condemned. Of what avail was my defence—that someone stealthily took my dagger from its sheath as it hung upon my thigh; that it was put into my hand and my fingers pressed upon it; that an irresistible hand forced mine to strike the blow. I was laughed at by the judges. Yet I swore that my defence was true. I name the man whose cunning and strength had accomplished the deed, and that man was Miles Sherlock—Kingston Boyne."

"Ah, my father!" said now, doubtless and loud.
 "I know it. I knew it then. He himself at the moment was disguised as a priest; I knew that no other man in Italy, perhaps in the world, could handle my arm and hand as easily as a man moves the hand and arm of an infant. His strength is that of six men in one; his feats of legerdemain magical. When he pretended to be my friend I had often seen him in sport perform incredible feats of strength and rapidity."

"But why did he do the deed?"
 "For two reasons. He knew that I was secretly endeavouring to have revenge, that my emissaries were seeking for him, and he feared, no doubt, that in time I might take vengeance for the disgrace he had put upon me. That was one reason; the other I learned afterwards; it was because he desired the death of Father Antelmo. Why, you will learn presently."

"And would no one believe you?"
 "None, but all said I had tried to slay the priest, and cast the attempt upon another. But I had recognized the voice which called out:
 "Magnasco has stabbed Father Antelmo." It was the voice of Jacob Atmonds, the valet of Miles Sherlock, the father of that woman Judith."

"Well, I was condemned, and I escaped, but with my good name lost for ever, Rouletta. I fled from Rome, from Italy, for a price was set upon my head. Do you think I have no cause to hate Miles Sherlock now?"

"I have said, and I repeat, my poor father, that I can only wonder why you have not slain him," replied Rouletta. "You said you have spared him for my sake."

"I am coming to that. I must say, for something tells me that you and I shall not be long together. I must first relate what I learned after I had escaped from Italy; and it was told to me by the lips of a dying man who believed me to be a priest—for I assumed many disguises in seeking for vengeance."

Freeland paused for a moment, as if collecting his thoughts, and then continued:

"Near the close of day, as I was passing through a German village, some of the villagers accosted me, and thinking from my garb that I was a priest, asked me to go with them to the bedside of a dying man."

"I did not dare to refuse, lest my disguise should be penetrated, and I knew, too, that the search of my enemies for me was as keen and persevering as mine for Miles Sherlock."

"With the prayers, rites, and forms of the service, I was well acquainted, and therefore I had no fear that anyone could detect that I was an impostor, while engaged in the duties of a holy man."

"I went with them, and the fast-falling eyes of the dying man welcomed me with a flash of delight; for as the village was wholly Protestant, he had feared he would die before one of his own religion could be found to administer its final consolations."

"Hasten, father!" he said, and I saw that he was an Italian.

"I will not relate all that the man told me of his past life, for the greater part of his confession had nothing to do with what I wish to say."

"The man had lived a quiet and blameless life as one of the servants of an Italian family, the Allioni, and had been faithful to that noble family until his honesty was corrupted, his fidelity made treachery, by the gold of Miles Sherlock."

"Ah!" said Rouletta, "then he did evil everywhere!"

"Everywhere and to everyone," continued Freeland. "His confession of his treachery to Count Bencio Allioni amounted to this:

"The count was a rich country nobleman, a man who had married for love; and happy in his wedded life, had retired from the army, in which he had risen to the rank of general, content to enjoy the peaceful blessings of a fortunate marriage."

"From all that I learned from the dying man, and from my investigations afterwards, the count and his lady were two noble and most admirable persons, rejoicing in love, wealth, and undisturbed happiness, until the appearance of Miles Sherlock in their paradise."

"Oh!" exclaimed Rouletta, who listened to this recital of the crimes of her lover with terrified attention. "Was he created to do only evil?"

"He could not come between the love of the husband and his devoted wife, but he won the heart of their only child, a most beautiful maiden, Milania Allioni. Repeat the name, Rouletta."

"Milania Allioni," repeated Rouletta, surprised by the request, and wondering why her father desired it. "It is a beautiful name, father; Milania Allioni."

"Yes, and she was beautiful far beyond the ordinary beauty of woman, and so was her mother—ah, and so is her child."

"The count had received Miles Sherlock—re-

member that I only call him Miles Sherlock because you have known and loved him by that name only—the count received the villain under his roof as a wounded man. Sherlock had fallen from his horse while riding near the Allionestate, and broken an arm. The care and solicitous hospitality of the count soon restored Sherlock to his wonted health and strength, and he repaid his benefactor by robbing him of his daughter, the beautiful, but unfortunate Milania Allioni."

"What base ingratitude!"
 "Yet how like Sherlock! The dying man confessed to me that he had aided him in the elopement, and accompanied him in his flight with Milania. She had no thought of being sought else to Sherlock than his wife, and on their arrival in Rome—for they hastened to that city—was lawfully wedded to him by the same priest for whose attempted assassination I was condemned."

"But Sherlock, you said, already had a wife—Judith?"

"Yes; she had been his wife, but he was at that time divorced from her. I may speak of her hereafter. Sherlock soon tired of his young bride; indeed she was scarcely as old then as you are now, Rouletta; and not content with casting her off and deserting her, robbed her of the child which had sprung from their marriage."

"How barbarous! How inhuman! Oh!" cried Rouletta, "that man is a fiend!"

"Ay, he is, ever was, and ever will be, Rouletta. He deserted her, and carried with him their infant. It chanced that he was met and threatened by the priest who had married them, the Father Antelmo. The priest had learned that he was attempting to deceive a very noble and wealthy lady into a marriage, to gain possession of her riches."

"It was for that reason that Sherlock desired the death of the priest, and so brought it about that the assassination should be laid upon my hands."

"By this plot he expected to rid himself of two dangerous enemies with one blow."

"I know not what has become of Father Antelmo. He may have died eventually of the wound, or he may be living now."

"But I learned from the dying servant of Sherlock where his master had concealed the infant, that his evil heart had one pure spot in it—devoted, unbounded love for his child."

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Rouletta, recoiling from the fierce glare of her father's eyes. "You did not harm that innocent child! You did not—oh! you could not have allowed your hate to harm her."

"Rouletta, would you have had me spare one of a brood of vipers because it was young? Listen, and you shall learn the vengeance that I wreaked."

"From the bed of the dying man I hastened to Spain, for it was there that Sherlock had concealed his infant daughter, then nearly two years of age. Milania had been there before me. The love of the deserted mother had inspired her in her search for her child. She had found it, wrested it from the woman in whose charge it had been placed, and fled, no one knew whither."

"Ah, thank heaven that the love of the mother snatched her innocent babe from your vengeance, my father," said Rouletta, clasping her hands.

"My child," continued Freeland, "he recovered the child before it had nestled a short month upon the bosom of its mother."

"My father, you appeal me. Can heaven permit such crimes?"

"I had no desire to possess the child when I learned that its mother had recovered it," resumed Freeland. "My vengeance had no aim at Milania Allioni—repeat that name again, my daughter."

"Milania Allioni," said Rouletta, softly, wondering more than before why he desired it.

"Remember it, and that I would never have intentionally inflicted a pang upon her heart. You will ever remember that, Rouletta?"

"Ever, my father. I am sure that your heart was too generous to wish to injure a woman."

"Had not Sherlock hunted down the unfortunate mother and torn from her arms her child, it might have remained with her for all that I would have done. But he recovered it, and concealed it in France, and there I found it soon after, for I was closely upon his path."

"You found it? You did not injure it? Oh, you need not tell me that you sought and found the poor mother, and placed her darling child upon her bosom—I know you did that, my father."

"You think so kindly of me, my child, and I am happy in that feeling," replied Freeland, while his voice trembled with deep emotion. "Yes, I wrested the infant from the hirelings of Sherlock, and for a year I sought the unfortunate mother. Then I heard that she was dead—had died in a Neapolitan hospital."

"Ah, poor, unfortunate, wretched lady," sighed Rouletta, as her eyes filled with tears.

"Perhaps she was more fortunate in dying, for no woman could overcome the fiendish cunning of Kingston Boyne, or, as we are calling him, Miles Sherlock," remarked Freeland. "I sometimes wonder how I escaped his malice, aided as he was by a man so vastly inferior in villainy to himself—I mean the infamous Jacob Atmonds—this man who now calls himself Carol Glenville."

"Perhaps," whispered Rouletta, in sudden alarm, "Sherlock has discovered that you are Carlo Di Magnasco!"

"And, therefore, has endeavoured to destroy my daughter. Yes, that suspicion has been pressing upon my mind. I knew someone was aiming to ruin me, and since what I saw to-night I tremble."

"But the child, my poor father, what did you do with it?"

"Having learned that its unfortunate mother was dead, and being myself ever in dread of the pursuit and search of its father, I fled. I believed here, under an assumed name, I might live in peace, and unsuspected by any one."

"I came, but not daring to assume the English name of my father, which I told you was Allison, nor daring to make any inquiries regarding his family, lest a suspicion might arise as to my identity, and that suspicion be wasted to the ears of Miles Sherlock, I took the name of Harry Freeland; I feigned to be an Englishman; I had been taught the English language by my father, yet knew I had a foreign accent. I adopted the trade of a blacksmith. Who would suspect that the gay and once noble Magnasco had chosen the sledge and the anvil, the forge and the bellows, instead of the pen, the sword, or the gaming table? I assumed rude and boisterous manners, rude and violent speech; anything, so that it was the opposite of what young Carlo Di Magnasco was noted for in Rome."

"The habit grew upon me, became natural, yet I gained a good reputation—it somewhat repaid me for the noble name which I had lost yonder in my native Italy. I was comparatively happy, for I took great pride in you."

"But, dear father," said Rouletta, as she wound her beautiful arms around his neck, and pressed her lips to his brow, "how could you love me so fondly—me, the child of the wife who had deserted you? Dear, dear father!"

"Rouletta," replied Freeland, for so we will continue to call him, "my child," he said, as he drew her fondly to his bosom and gazed into her beautiful eyes, "I told you that your mother eloped with that villain, did I not?"

"Yes, father," replied Rouletta, wondering less at his mournful tone than at the strange trembling which had seized upon all his limbs.

"I told you, too, that my wife had been my bride scarcely four months when she fled, and that from the day of her flight to this I have never heard of her—did I not?"

"Ah! then, though I am your daughter, I am not the child of that wife. Thank heaven for that!" exclaimed Rouletta, joyfully.

"I told you, too, that I never married again," said Freeland.

"Yes, I remember," murmured Rouletta, as a chill began to creep about her proud heart—that heart which had throbbled so joyfully a moment before. "Who was my mother?"

"You have spoken her name several times, Rouletta," replied Freeland, in a sad and compassionate tone. "Can you repeat it again? Milania Allioni!"

"Milania Allioni! Great heaven!" exclaimed Rouletta, springing back and staring at Freeland as if half-crazed. "You said, or I think you said, that you never saw that poor lady."

"I have never seen her, Rouletta, or perhaps you would now be with her, if she lives."

"Great heaven! Wait! Let me think! Let me summon strength to hear what I fear," cried Rouletta. "You are not my father?"

"I am not, Rouletta."

"I am the infant child you rescued from Miles Sherlock. Oh! I see it all now! I am Miles Sherlock's child!"

A wild cry of agony broke from Rouletta's white lips, and she sank senseless into the arms of him whom she had so long thought to be her father.

(To be continued.)

QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY.—The report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the constitution and management of Queen Anne's Bounty was published recently. The fund administered by this Board was founded in 1704, when Queen Anne gave up the first-fruits and tenths derivable from the episcopal and capitular corporations and paro-

cial livings, part of the hereditary revenues of the crown, for the purpose of augmenting the incomes of the poorer clergy, and provision was made for the distribution of the net income of the board by way of grants of capital sums. The affairs of the board have for a long time been practically under the management of a small number of the bishops, with the occasional assistance of a few laymen. Out of the total income received from first-fruits and tenths, the gross average annual produce of the former, for three years past, has been 4,431l. 8s. 1d. In respect of the first-fruits and tenths of the bishoprics, a yearly sum is now paid amounting together to 2,859l. 14s. The gross yearly income received from tenths is 10,240l. 8s. 11d. The salary of the chief officer of the board, who, Cerberus-like, is secretary, treasurer, and receiver, amounts to 1,350l. This gentleman has also a house rent-free at the expense of the board, and is allowed to take independent professional business, which is carried on in the same house by himself and his partner, an arrangement "which the committee cannot approve." It appears, too, that the amount of "house-rent and casual expenses," last year, was 866l. 14s. 7d.; and the committee suggest that a reduction should be made in the salary and expenses of that establishment when another secretary is appointed. The salaries of the subordinate staff amount to 3,420l. yearly. The committee admit that the business of the board is "carefully and well-conducted," but they express regret that the lay members do not more habitually attend. They think also that the board should be rendered more conformable to the shape in which it actually works by being reduced in number, the members having a more defined responsibility, and there being a considerable lay element in the new constitution.

SCIENCE.

At a recent sitting of the French Academy of Sciences a letter from M. d'Arrest, the Copenhagen astronomer, announced a new observation of Encke's Comet. The writer remarks that this celestial body is now following the same apparent route as in 1825. This is its thirteenth return.

It has been demonstrated by scientific and accurate experiments, carried on with all the skill and attention that the subject demands, that air travelling at the rate of 21 ft. per second causes an impactive reaction upon a body equal to 1 lb. per square foot.

By observations in localities distinguished for a very transparent atmosphere (such as Marseilles, Palermo, Athens), and by observations on the summits of Mount Etna, Janssen has proved the absence of water from the atmosphere of the sun, but its presence in the atmospheres of Mars and Saturn.

Mr. HUGGINS has succeeded in showing that the nebulae are not approaching the earth or receding from it at a rate which is appreciable by his instruments, but he finds that Sirius—the only fixed star which he has had time to examine satisfactorily—is approaching the solar system at the rate of nearly 29½ miles per second.

M. LABRET, at the last session of the *Société Savantes*, presented an account of some human bones discovered by him in Dordogne. The bones of the limbs were of remarkable size and prodigious strength. Three skulls were found also of great size. The age of these bones is judged to be equal to the mammoth, and they are supposed to belong to the same geological period.

THE solvent power of glycerine upon several substances commonly used in medicine and the arts is as follows:—One part of sulphur requires 2,000 parts of glycerine; iodine, 100 parts; red iodide of mercury, 340 parts; corrosive sublimate, 14 parts; sulphate of quinine, 48 parts; tannin, 6 parts; veratrin, 96 parts; atropia, 50 parts; hydrochlorate of morphia, 19 parts; tartar emetic, 50 parts; iodide of sulphur, 60 parts; iodide of potassium, 3 parts; sulphide of potassium, 10 parts.

JUDGING from the minimum quantities of food upon which an ordinary individual is capable of existing without suffering in health, it would seem that about 4100 grains of carbon and 190 grains of nitrogen are required in his daily diet. These proportions have been determined from a large number of observations, as by those of Dr. Lyon Playfair, in his inquiries into the dietaries of hospitals, prisons, and workhouses, and by those of Dr. Edward Smith, in his examination of the amounts of food upon which the Lancashire operatives were capable of living during the cotton famine, and also by his inquiries into the dietaries of indoor labourers.

HEAT REFLECTED FROM THE MOON'S SURFACE.—Some years ago the Astronomer Royal proved, by

the evidence of many years' observations at Greenwich Observatory, that there was no foundation for the popular belief that the changes of the moon produce a change in the wind. But the mass of mankind, and sailors especially, are still quite sure that the wind changes when the moon changes. Perhaps they will discover a hero in Mr. Park Harrison, a painstaking meteorologist, who has made it clear to the Astronomical Society that the heat reflected from the moon's surface does not affect our atmosphere, and consequently our weather. Many persons have remarked that the sky is clear about the time of full moon. The explanation is, that the reflected heat being entirely absorbed by our atmospheric vapour, raises the temperature of the air above the clouds, which then evaporate more freely. The difference of temperature between the greatest and least amount of heat reflected from the moon is two degrees and a fraction only; yet, small as it is, it appears to be sufficient to produce the effect of clearing our atmosphere. Mr. Harrison is too diligent a worker not to carry out his investigations farther.

ROYAL CONVENTION FOR THE EXCHANGE OF WORKS OF ART FOR THE PEOPLE.

DURING the Paris Exhibition a convention was entered into by several princes of the reigning families of Europe, whereby they agreed mutually to assist the museums of Europe in procuring casts and copies of national objects for the promotion of art.

Throughout the world every country possesses fine historical monuments of art of its own, which can easily be reproduced by casts, electrotypes, photographs, and other processes, without the slightest damage to the originals. This is the course of operations suggested:—

1. Each country to form its own commission according to its own views for obtaining such reproductions as it may desire for its own museums.
2. The commissions of each country to correspond with one another, and send information of what reproductions each causes to be made, so that every country, if disposed, may take advantage of the labours of other countries at a moderate cost.
3. Each country to arrange for making exchanges of objects which it desires.

The following princes have already signed the convention:—Albert Edward, Prince of Wales; Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh; Frederick William, Crown Prince of Prussia; Louis, Prince of Hesse; Albert Prince Royal of Saxony; Prince Napoleon (Jerome); Philippe, Comte de Flandre; the Czarovitch; Nicolas, Duc de Leuchtenburg; Oscar, Prince of Sweden and Norway; Humbert, Prince Royal of Italy; Amadeus, Duke of Aosta; Charles-Louis, Archduke of Austria; Rainer, Archduke of Austria; Frederick, Crown Prince of Denmark.

We view this remarkable convention with the greatest satisfaction: it promises much more than is at first sight obvious; and we are truly glad to be able to regard his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales as the originator and main promoter of so admirable an undertaking.

MR. FLETCHER, of the Manchester Boiler Association, states that it has been found that boilers of the plain two-flued construction, aided by a water-heater, are able to develop a very high result. He has evaporated as much as 12½ lb. of water at 100 deg. by 1 lb. of coal on a fire-grate 6 ft. in length. In both cases this has been done without smoke, and while evaporating as much as 100 cubic feet of water from the boiler in the course of the hour with the 6 ft. fire-grate, and eighty cubic feet with the 4 ft. grate, which is sufficient to develop, with a good engine, about 200 I.H.P. per hour in the first case, and 160 I.H.P. per hour in the second.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF HUMAN POWER.—The following, which is the result of many experiments and calculations by different scientific men, shows approximately the effect produced by human power when employed in different ways, and gives us a good idea of their comparative efficacy. The average duration of the labour may be reckoned at eight hours per day. Units of work done by a man in a day:—Raising his own body, 2,000,000; rowing a boat, 1,900,000; working a treadmill, 1,870,000; pushing or drawing a carriage, 1,500,000; turning a winch, 1,250,000; working a pile engine by hand, 1,000,000; throwing earth with a spade, 500,000.

SHADE PRODUCED BY LIGHT.—A curious illustration of the distinction between the actinic and the luminous quality of light, has been recently communicated by the well-known photographer, Mr. Rejlander. Some time ago he was producing a portrait in the open air, a little after seven in the evening. The setting sun, low on the horizon, illuminated all objects on which it shone with a yellow glow; whilst the opposite arch of the sky was bright, clear, and blue. On examining the sun-illuminated image on the ground glass, Mr. Rejlander was struck with the fact

that the side which was practically in shadow was much more actinic in colour than the rest, and was convinced that the side of the face on which the sun shone would, in the picture, be the darkest side, whilst the opposite and apparently shaded side the lightest. Such was indeed the result; and the very fine print obtained illustrates the odd phenomenon of sunlight being represented by shadow in a photographic image.

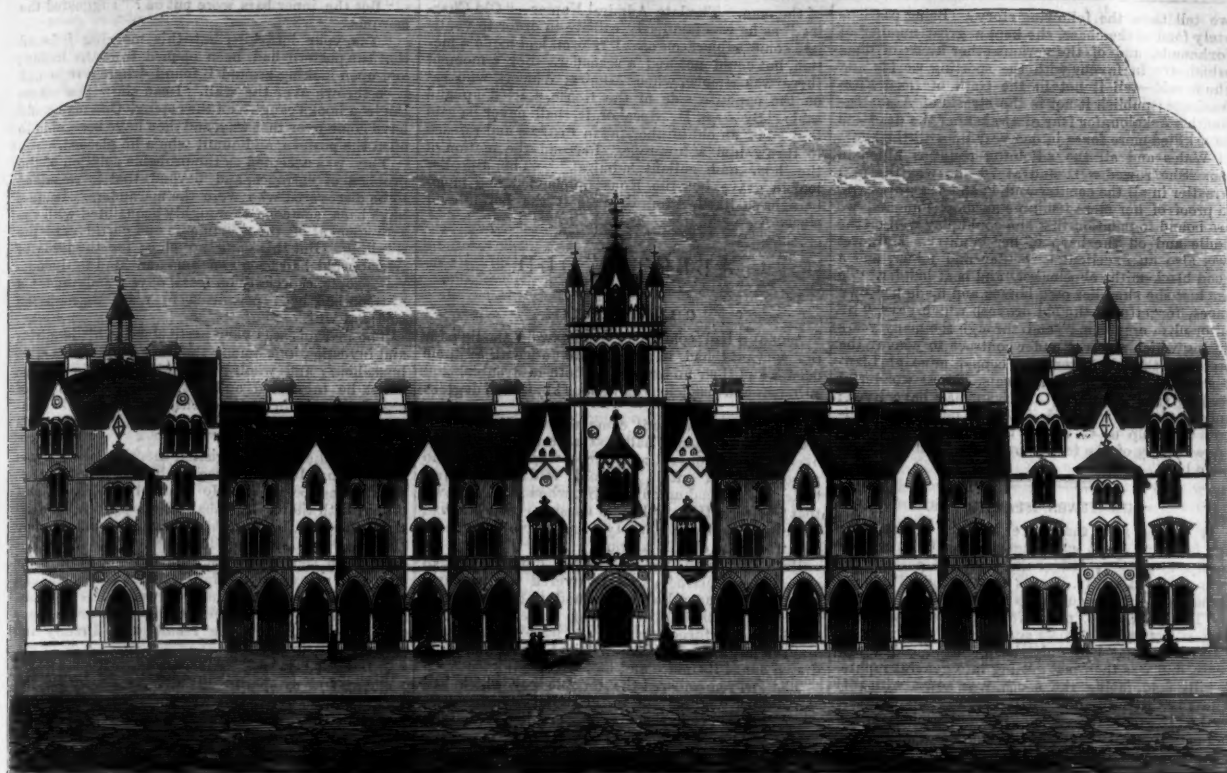
THE PARSONS GUN.—A 68-pounder cast-iron gun, converted on the principle proposed by Mr. Parsons, by the insertion of a tough steel tube reinforced at the breech end by another steel tube, secured into the gun by a breech screw, underwent a trial at the proof-butt, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, by firing two rounds with charges of 87½ lb. of powder and a shot weighing 150 lb., with satisfactory results. The gun, which originally weighed 96 cwt. 1 qr., fired about 400 rounds in its smoothbore state, and was condemned as unserviceable from fissures in the vent. Its present weight on Parsons' system is 103 cwt. It is farther to be tested by firing 1,000 rounds, with charges of 80 lb. of powder and a shot 150 lb.

THE EARTH.—In a recent and able article on the thermometrical state of the globe, M. Arago maintains the following propositions:—First, the earth was at one time fluid; second, the cause of that fluidity was fire; third, at the origin of all things the earth was probably incandescent, and even now contains a portion of its primitive heat; fourth, in a thousand years the general temperature of the mass of the earth has not cooled the tenth part of a degree, and the demonstration of this proposition is derived from the orbit of the moon. Arago contends that the surface of the earth has cooled down to such an extent as scarcely to preserve a trace of its primitive temperature, though it is true that, at certain depths, the original heat is prodigious. At the surface all the changes are reduced to almost one thirtieth part of a degree.

AMONG the Reports on the Paris Exhibition is a chapter on a new system of shoeing horses. Its inventor, M. Charlier, contends that the present shoe destroys the horse's foot, and substitutes for it an iron band, let into a rectangular groove scooped from the outer circle of the horse's foot. This band is fastened with seven rectangular nails, driven into oval holes. The sole of the foot and the frog are thus allowed to touch the ground, the horse never slips, and never gets diseases of the foot. The new shoe has been tried by M. Lauguet, a large jobmaster in Paris, and has reduced lameness in his stables by two-thirds. The Omnibus Company, moreover, have shod 1,200 horses, and speak of the improvement in high terms. Has anybody ever clearly explained why a horse can travel without shoes all his life on a stony desert as hard as iron, and cannot travel on an English road?

It may be remembered that the planet Mars shows bright areas at its poles, alternately increasing and decreasing, appearing precisely in the same manner as our own earth would look at a great distance having, during the winter season, its northern polar region covered with snow and ice much farther towards the equator than during our summer season. Hence it has long been concluded that the planet Mars is covered with water just like our earth. From other observations it has long been known that Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn are surrounded by gaseous atmospheres. By the observations of Janssen, the presence of water on Mars is now finally proved; as the seasons change on the planet its polar regions are more or less enveloped in ice, just as here on the earth, and at all times the watery vapour in the atmosphere of Mars is seen in the spectrum of the planet, as we notice the vapour of our atmosphere in the spectrum of the setting sun.

THE SPADE.—Few persons, perhaps, are aware of how much we are indebted to the spade. By digging into the earth, where glimpses of the life of past generations have been stored and preserved almost as freshly as when they were deposited ages ago, we now see with our own eyes the domestic implements, the tools, the toys, and the buildings of the ancients; and day by day we are filling in the picture of the past with the veritable people that then lived, and with details of the manner in which they spent their daily lives; matters which are more interesting, after all, than a mere history of wars and great political events, the truth of which it is so difficult to gain in the lifetime of any generation. It is, perhaps, well that the earth has buried for centuries the remains of the buildings in which these events occurred. Had they been exposed to the weather in past times, art would not have been able to preserve and repeat infinitely what the spade has discovered.



[COLUMBIA MARKET, BUILT BY MISS BURDETT COUTTS.]

BETHNAL GREEN MARKET.

ONE of the greatest social movements of the age is that for the establishment of markets for the people, and few are there calculated to do a greater amount of good. The want of such a means for supplying the masses with commodities of the best quality at moderate prices has long been felt, and it is remarkably strange that London has been hitherto so deficient. This want, however, will shortly be a thing of the past. People's markets are now being established in every part of the great metropolis. Before long almost every district and every populous suburb will contain a mart of its own, in which people of moderate means will be supplied, as well as their more affluent neighbours, and where overcharges will be rendered impossible. In this, as indeed in almost every project for the good of the masses, Miss Burdett Coutts is a prominent promoter. This lady, at once the richest heiress and most philanthropic woman of her day, has devoted her life to charity, and the promotion of every reform calculated to improve the condition of the poor and moderately well-off classes. She has endowed a bishopric at Adelaide, South Australia, built a church and schools at Westminster, erected another in Carlisle, built model lodging-houses, and assisted most lavishly in the establishment of religious and charitable institutions. Great and useful as have been her exertions in the cause of charity heretofore, none of the numerous projects Miss Coutts has so materially aided to promote have been more calculated to add to the comfort and general welfare of the poorer classes of London, than the establishment of a people's market at Bethnal Green. In no part of London was it more wanted than here. In this densely-populated district, where fever so often runs high, and where poverty is so general, one of the greatest wants was a means of procuring good and cheap food, for nothing is there that tends more to the spread of infection than bad or an insufficiency of food. Thanks, then, to the beneficence of Miss Coutts, a market has been established upon a large scale, at which all classes will be able to procure all the ordinary commodities of every day life at a moderate price.

The new market, now rapidly approaching completion, is a handsome quadrangular building of the Domestic Gothic style, 285 ft. long on the west and east sides, and 255 ft. on the north and south, partly of brick, relieved by stone and terra cotta facings and ornamentation, and reflects much credit upon Mr. H. A. Darbionaire, the architect. On the north

side of the quadrangle there will be a spacious Market Hall, 104 ft. long by 50 ft. wide, with a handsome wooden roof springing from twelve clustered shafts of polished granite. This hall is to contain twenty-four shambles on the ground floor with office attached. Above the shambles, and approached by internal staircases, will be galleries arranged for the sale of flowers, roots, &c., and the hall will communicate with the colonnades, which surround the market square, by groined archways leading to a large enclosure or yard on the north side, where the heavy traffic of the market will be carried on.

From the central towers, in each wing, water is to be supplied to the entire building, and on that in the west wing is a scroll containing the motto, "study to be quiet and to do your own business." This side has been named Angelina-gardens, while the east wing will be called Georgina-gardens, in memory of the founder, Miss Coutts. In the centre of the quadrangle there is to be a fountain, and trees are to be planted around it.

There is to be a new street, which will run from the Hackney-road, by the north side of the market, and several existing thoroughfares will be greatly improved. One of these is Crabtree-row, on the south side, which is to be widened to 50 feet. The term for the compulsory purchase of lands is limited to five years, and provision is made that not less than eight weeks' notice shall be given before the taking for the purposes of the market, or approaches, of fifteen or more houses occupied wholly or partially by the labouring classes. Such a clause may appear quite unnecessary, considering how much interest Miss Burdett Coutts has always shown in the poor.

The market has been arranged to meet the requirements of six classes of dealers—viz., those who rent the shops and their adjacent dwellings; those who rent the shambles in the market hall; those who rent the stalls in the galleries of the hall; those who rent standing space underneath the colonnades; those who rent standing space in the open square; those who hire barrows and trucks, for the purpose of disposing of their goods about the streets. The dwellings in the wings are intended for clerks and others employed in the City; they are let at reduced rentals, until all Miss Coutts's projected improvements in the neighbourhood are carried out.

A greater boon than this market could hardly have been bestowed upon the inhabitants of Bethnal Green, and by its establishment Miss Burdett Coutts has added a crowning act of benevolence to the many with which her name is connected.

A REGULAR VISITOR.—A land turtle has been known to make thirty-seven annual visits to a particular locality on the farm of James A. Smith, near Mapleville, Burrillville, R.I. Whenever seen by Mr. Smith himself he has caught his turtle-ship, and marked the year on the shell. The first one, still legible, is "J. A. S., 1831." The other years inscribed are 1834, 1840, 1844, 1845, 1852, 1855, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1868. So regular has been this tortoise's visits that Mr. Smith and family would suffer the loss of a real pleasure should they be intermitted.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN PARIS.—It is very hard even for a clever government to silence Parisians when resolved to talk. By law no elector in France can address a public meeting outside his own district unless he is also a candidate. The Opposition have, therefore, resolved that every Liberal who wishes to speak shall declare himself a candidate, and take the path to the Constitution, thus enabling himself to speak in any district of the capital. We are informed that nearly 3,000 Liberals have expressed their willingness to "take the stamp" on these terms, and unless the Imperial Government adopts some new device, the freedom of speech in Paris will be nearly as complete as in England.

WAGES OF WOMEN IN PARIS.—The Chamber of Commerce of Paris has instituted an inquiry into the employment of females in that city, and the following are said to be the results:—There are in Paris 106,810 *ouvrières*. They may be divided into four principal classes; those who earn from 3s. 9d. to 8s. per day, of whom there are 770; those who earn from 1s. 10d. to 2s. 6d. per day, of whom there are 39,000; those who earn 1s. 8d. a day, who are said to number 49,000; and, lastly, 17,000 who earn between 5d. and 1s. per diem. The average will thus be about 1s. 8d. per day, from which, however, deduction must be made for Sundays and *fête* days, and also for dead seasons, which amount, according to general calculation, to nearly a third of the whole year. The result arrived at is that, taking the whole year round, the average earning of a Parisian workwoman is about 11d. per diem.

A WONDERFUL WOMAN.—All of us, or at all events most of us, remember the female soldier who lived to a hundred, and lies buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Brighton. But she had a contemporary no less remarkable than herself, indeed even more so in her personal character, though she fell short of her years. What will our readers think of Margaret Uch Evan, of Llanberis, who died at the age of 92 towards the close of last century, when

we tell them the following story? Being passionately fond of the chase, she kept a great number of foxhounds, and of the various other kinds of dogs which are in favour with the sporting world; and she is said—tell it not in the Gath of Lord Fitzhardinge; publish it not in the streets of Aesheton-Smith's Askalon, for fear of awakening the dead—to have killed more foxes in one year than all the hunts of Wales and all the adjoining counties killed in ten. She rowed well, and at 70 she was the best wrestler in all the country round; and yet, *per contra*, in proof of her more feminine accomplishments, we are bound to mention that she could play well on the fiddle and on the harp of her country. Margaret was also an excellent carpenter and joiner, and a good blacksmith, shoemaker, and boat-builder. To the last she shod her own horses and made her own shoes, forgetful of the old proverb which says, "Ne sutor ultra crepidam;" and through the many years during which she was under contract to convey the ore down the lakes from the copper mine at Llanberis, she built her own boats. More wonderful women than Margaret Uch Evan may have lived; and we shall be rejoiced if any of our correspondents can help us to record the deeds of any lady more worthy of the female franchise than she must have been.

THE YEARS 1818 AND 1863.

It will be seen that the experience of fifty years ago holds out great encouragement to the sowing of turnips at a late period of the year, and perhaps the facts recorded by Mr. Barnes may be turned to good account by our agriculturists:

"The year 1818, now fifty years ago, was the longest, hottest, and driest summer I ever remember. Talavera, wheat had only been introduced a few years, and was then just getting into general repute. A hilly field, facing the south, was sown with this wheat in the autumn of 1817. It was ripe and cut on the 29th of June; some of it was thrashed on the 2nd of July, ground on the 4th, and bread made from it on the same day. The owner of the field was a large miller. This was the earliest wheat I ever saw; the whole harvest was general by the 7th of July, and all cut and cleared by about the 25th of that month.

"The whole country was of the same colour; not a blade of green grass was to be seen—not even turnip or cabbage; cattle perished for the lack of food and water; immense numbers of large trees died; plantations on dry brashy soils, and everything in many hedges for long distances, died right out. Trees that lived lost their leaves; people had to go many miles for water, and pay dear for it; for all that, we had afterwards one of the most plentiful, prosperous, and fruitful seasons which I ever yet saw or remember to have seen. Wheat was a wonderful crop, and so good in quality that the bread was splendid: both it and wheat were soon reduced in price by two-thirds. Barley and lent or spring-sown crops were generally short, particularly late sown, as it never had any rain from seed-time till harvest. The best barley was just equal in price with wheat, the only period I recollect it being so in my time; hops were a wonderful crop, and first-rate in quality; they came down to 1s. per lb.; apples, from 1s. to 3s. per bushel; and the best Orleans plums, and other good varieties, realised from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per bushel, and plenty of common plums were sold at 1d. per quart; cherries 1d. per lb.

"When the fine rains set in in September, the land was so sweetened and pulverized, hot as a furnace or hot-bed, smoking like a lime-kiln, that folks said it was too late for turnips; however, some cultivators did venture; the seed vegetated so quickly that the rows were green or most luxuriant in six weeks, and there was produced most splendid turnips, as large as a child's head. As to grass and other vegetation, in a few weeks they were so luxuriant, plentiful, and of such a splendid quality, that all kinds of stock thrived and fattened at such a rate as was never before seen."

ADMIRAL WALCOTT.—The death of old Admiral Walcott opportunely illustrates the dangers of Parliamentary labours to men of his age (seventy-eight). He had wisely intended to retire after next election, and would probably have been alive now if he had abstained from re-entering Parliament in 1865. The old admiral served at the bombardment of Copenhagen, and was enthusiastically fond of his profession. He has often spoken in the House of Commons, with a tear in his eye and a quivering voice of his applications to the Admiralty for a ship, and of his "hope deferred;" and wasted life on account of want of interest. He was a fine sailor of the old school—kind, warm-hearted, blunt, and brave. One speech of his, a good many years ago, elicited a cry of "Good!" from a late Speaker, but was characteristic

of the man. The late Admiral Napier—"Old Charley," as he was familiarly called—in order to ventilate some subject on naval reform, had made a motion, but could not find a second. For a moment there was silence, when Admiral Walcott, who sat on the opposite side of the House, started up and said: "By —, Mr. Speaker, it shall never be said that I saw an old brother-tar in distress and refused to throw him a tow-rope. I second the motion of the hon. and gallant admiral." The Speaker looked grave, but the House applauded, and members have liked Admiral Walcott the better ever since.

ABBOTSWOLD.

CHAPTER. XII.

A CLOUD had come over Abbotswold Castle; for the servants had not failed to notice that their master and their mistress were both in trouble, and surmises and suspicions of various kinds and degrees were rife.

A whisper—whence it came none could tell—had reached the servants' hall that a dreadful calamity overhung the house; and there were a few who feared that all within the old walls might fall under the impending curse. So, when it was known that Gertrude Harworth was missing—that she had been forcibly dragged away—the whole household was in a state of wild alarm.

Ruth Lockwood, the girl whose duty it was to attend upon Gertrude, first discovered the woman's absence; and upon looking around in the ante-chamber, she could see that there had been strife. The small table was overturned, two chairs were thrown over, and the large Flemish mat by the bedside had been drawn out of its place and half reversed.

The girl remembered the terrible cry which had startled her while sitting in the chamber of her mistress, and also that the marchioness had heard the same.

These things she told the servants, before her lady had arisen, and they were alarmed beyond measure.

As soon as the marchioness learned that her young woman was missing, and had been informed of the condition in which Ruth had found things in the chamber, she went directly to her husband and told him the story.

"It was Gertrude's voice we heard last night," she said; "and she must have been in the hands of marauders at the time."

"But what reason could anyone have had for spiriting poor Gertrude away?" queried the marquise.

And thereupon the marchioness told him the strange hints and promises which the woman had given her.

"Dear Eustace," she said, "villains are seeking to ruin us, and Gertrude evidently possesses knowledge which, upon being published, would thwart them. Very likely they know of this, and have thus taken her away in season to keep back her evidence."

"But," returned the marquise, his mind running upon that part of the subject nearest to his own affairs, "what can be the nature of the disclosure which Gertrude promised to make?"

"It is something connected with your brother's marriage, I am very sure," replied the marchioness.

"I cannot conceive what it can be," said the marquise. "The record of that marriage is in the register; and it is an honest record, too, as far as I can judge."

"And yet," persisted the lady. "Gertrude assured me that she could tell me that which would make that record worthless, or, at least, such was the bearing of her words. Oh, Eustace, she must be found! Depend upon it, our safety hangs upon the evidence she can give."

Though the marquise could not conceive of any possible way in which that record could benefit him, yet the fact that the woman had been taken away from the castle, seemed to indicate that his enemies had done this thing to silence her.

Toucing the record, apart from this strange assertion of Gertrude Harworth's, the marquise was confident that it was all fair and true.

He had known old Mark Morrow; and though he had his peculiar ideas, yet he was an honest man, and the marquise knew could never have been persuaded to make a false entry.

However, the first thing was to search for the missing woman, and as soon as the marquise had eaten his breakfast, he summoned his men-servants, and questioned them. How was it possible that anyone from without could have gained entrance to the court? The gates were all secured at nightfall, and could not have been forced open.

"The postern," said Donald Burns, the groom, "was not locked."

"But the inner bars were put on?" suggested the marquise.

"Yes, your lordship; but this morning I found that the postern had been opened from the inside; and upon looking around I found where a rope had been thrown over the wall. I can show you where the iron hooks caught on the coping. One man could have come over that way, and then have been able to open the postern, and admit whom he pleased."

This was accepted as the probable solution of the problem of entrance, and beyond that it remained to be discovered who were the marauders. It must have been someone thoroughly acquainted with the arrangement of the apartments and corridors of the dwelling. But this gave no clue; for the lords of Abbotswold had been generous and kind to the outside people, especially on festival days; and hundreds of them had been permitted to roam through the castle at will.

The marquise was very particular in his inquiries and investigations among the members of his own household; and when these had been made without effect, he organised and set at work a system of search outside, in all directions, making sure that nothing was left undone that could be done towards the desired end.

The marquise himself visited the cottage of Owen Callington. It was an disagreeable task, but he felt that it must be done. He found the old man and Albert both there. Agatha was absent. As he entered the yard, he thought he saw a woman pass by the rear window, and imagined that she might have been sent away; but he did not inquire for her. He was searching for Gertrude Harworth, and he made his own life as quickly as possible. He had expected to see the young man grow angry and impatient; but the result was directly the opposite.

"Indeed, my lord," Albert said, with a look of concern and sympathy so well assumed that the visitor dared not say it was not real, "we had not heard of this. I have seen Gertrude often, and I have regarded her as a very excellent woman. I am truly sorry, and if I can be of assistance, you may command me."

"I only seek information," returned the marquise.

"I did not know but that—"

He hesitated, and the young man seized the opportunity; and, in tones and manner, exactly suited to his words, said:

"I am sorry this thing has happened. I should have been sorry at any time; but more particularly now, when I am the cause of so much unrest to you in another direction. I can only hope, my lord, that you have not allowed your excitement and anxiety to turn your suspicions in this direction. I would rather another should suspect me of murder, than that you should hold a suspicion of evil against me of any kind."

"Indeed, my young friend, I hardly know what to think."

"Well," cried old Owen, starting up from his chair—the word coming out as though it had been shot from a cannon—"I know what to think; and I know what I'll do, too. Gertrude Harworth was as likely a lass as ever lived; and if evil hath befallen her, I'll start out at once in search. Your folks at the castle may search landward, while Albert and I send out our boatmen, and we'll look along the shore; and, mayhap, overhaul some of the craft that are ready to sail."

There was more said; but that was all the information the marquise obtained, and when he took his leave he was at a loss to decide whether the old man and his grandson had told him the truth, or whether they had been false to him.

One thing in his mind weighed heavily against the idea of their good faith. He was sure they had sent Agatha away when they saw him coming. Why should they have feared her presence, if they had only the truth to tell?

He stopped at a short distance from the cottage, and thought of going back and demanding to see Agatha Callington; but he gave it up, and pursued his way homeward; and as he went he had a new thought.

When he stopped, with the impulse to return to the fisher's cottage, he had spoken to himself the name of Agatha Callington; and thence the thought flashed upon him:

"Why, if during all these years she has had the legal right to claim our family name, has she neglected the opportunity? Why, when she might have justly worn the proud name of Percy, has she been content to retain her maiden name, thus leaving her son to bear the stigma of illegitimacy?"

And he allowed himself to hope, for the while, that no such right had ever been hers.

A full week was spent by the inmates of the castle searching for the missing woman; but not the slightest trace of her could be found. Every dwell-

ing—every habitable place—where she could possibly have been conveyed, was visited; and all those engaged in fitting out the various vessels that had left the coast had been questioned.

The woman had been taken away during the night of Monday, and it was not until the middle of the following week that the marquis gave up the work; and even then he only did so because his attention was called in another direction.

He was sitting in his library, in company with his wife, when it was announced to him that young Callington wished to speak with him. He directed that the applicant should be shown up, and before he came the marchioness withdrew.

Albert Callington entered the library in an easy, independent manner, and after the usual compliments, he proceeded directly to the business in hand:

"Lord Percy, you are already aware of the fact that I propose to lay claim to the marquise of Abbotswold, together with all its attendant possessions, material and titular. Your elder brother was my father; I was born in wedlock; and, in the eye of the law, I and not you, became Lord of Abbotswold when John Percy died. I was the true heir."

"My dear friend," said the marquis, with the expression of one who feels that he is playing a heavy card, "I think you will find it difficult to make an English jury believe that you have been all these years the true lord of these broad estates, and have yet remained in comparative penury and want. If you will reflect a moment, I think you will see how frail is the ground upon which you stand: For ten years yourself and your mother, together with your poor old grandfather, have been content to live upon the pittance which the former marquis secured to you; and now, at this late day, you come forward with this monstrous claim. What can your mother have discovered now that she did not know ten years ago?"

"She has discovered nothing," said the visitor, frankly and coolly.

"Then I should like to know," cried the marquis, "how you hope to convince a jury that you are the true heir?"

The young man smiled as he lifted his right leg over the left, and even that smile, slight as it was, sent all the confidence from the marquis's face.

"My dear sir," replied Albert, still smiling most affably, "if you had asked me if I possessed any evidence at the present time which I did not possess ten years ago, I should have told you yes. And now I will explain. It is my determination, in this matter, to be frank and straightforward. Now listen:

"When my mother stood in the church, on that Saturday night, two-and-twenty years ago, she supposed it was a true clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony; but afterwards she was told that it was not so. Someone to whom Albert Percy had told what he intended to do, gave her this information. It was a man who had been asked himself to play the clergyman's part. My mother never saw her husband after receiving this gratuitous intelligence. He was killed on the very next day. She remembered, however, that she had signed her name upon a book in the church; but she was told that it could not have been the register, because the clerk was not there, and of course nobody but the clerk could have produced that important book. My grandfather had had his doubts from the first; and when he had heard the story of the man who had refused to act as clergyman, he believed that the marriage had been a sham, and never took the trouble of going to the register."

"But," interrupted the marquis, "I should have supposed he would have tried to find the man who finally consented to act."

"Ah, my lord, thereby hangs the most unfortunate part of the story of those days. My grandfather's quick and violent temper did us all great mischief, as you shall hear. He did not have to inquire much before he discovered that one of his brother fishermen, named Felix Gladwell, who did much in the way of smuggling, had consented to act as clergyman. Grandfather gained positive evidence that Gladwell received twenty pounds from Albert Percy as soon as he had consented to play the part, and that he also accompanied them to the church. With this information the old man went after Felix, and when he met him, he commenced at once to abuse him; then he flew at him like a tiger, and when he had punished him, as he thought, enough, he told him why he had done it. Had he been calm, and, in the first place, asked Felix if he had helped to deceive his darling child, he would have discovered the truth. He would have learned that the marriage ceremony was performed by a true clergyman, and I should have been in possession of Abbotswold long ago. But Felix could not forgive him for that beating, and he held

his peace. About a year afterwards this man was convicted of smuggling, and transported. So his evidence was lost."

"But the clergyman?" demanded the marquis.

"Stay," cried the visitor, with a wave of the hand. "Now you have hit the grand secret. This clergyman has been at the bottom of everything. Felix Gladwell, instead of being the enemy my grandfather had thought him, was truly a friend. He meant that poor Agatha, whom he had himself loved right well, should be Marchioness of Abbotswold if she lived; and to that end he engaged a clergyman—one Peter Walsenburg by name—to officiate in his place; and now mark this man's cunning. He says to himself, 'It was planned that this should be a mock marriage, but I will make it a real one.' So he goes to the parish clerk, and says to him, 'Here—see what the son of Lord Percy has done. And now he has planned to add still farther to his crime by stealing away your keys; entering the church; and there having a mock marriage performed, leading poor Agatha Callington to believe that it is all right. Let us thwart him. If you will give me the marriage register, I will marry them, and make them sign their names therein; and you can fill in the record afterwards.' So Walsenburg got the register, and so carefully did he cover up all that part of the page which had been written over, that Albert Percy, in the dim light, did not discover the cheat. It was during the day that Peter Walsenburg called upon the clerk first; and when, in the evening, the latter found that his keys had really been stolen away, and that the young man had entered the church, he was ready to do anything to punish him."

"And now, my lord, let us follow this man. About a month after the death of Albert Percy he came to Abbotswold, and learned that Callington and his family believed the marriage ceremony to have been a mock affair. He visited the clerk, and found that none of them had asked to look at the register; and he furthermore learned that Owen Callington was to receive a stated sum annually from the marquis, for the use of Agatha and her child. Then Walsenburg said to himself, 'I will hold this secret for my own benefit, and by-and-bye I can make it yield me much money. One of these days I will set Agatha Callington's son upon the throne of Abbotswold, if he will pay me enough.'"

"Yes, my lord," pursued the young man, dropping his right foot to the floor, and sitting up as though he had got nearly through the story, "that was the clergyman's plan, and he carried it out. He was determined to have a large sum. He dared not take Agatha's word, because she might never have any money. In short, I was the one solitary, identical individual through whose hands any number of thousands of pounds of Abbotswold's money could reach him; so to me alone would he sell his secret. Of course I could not have fall away with the property until I was one-and-twenty; so the man has been patiently waiting for me to reach that age. Then he could come to me and say, 'Here—sign this paper, and I will give you yonder castle.' Had he come to me at an earlier date, he knew that my signature to such a paper would have been good for nothing."

"Why did he not come to you when you were one-and-twenty? Why did he wait a year?" asked the marquis, in a sort of struggling manner, as though it were his last hope.

"He was in Rome, and could not well leave. He will return as soon as this thing is settled."

"Ah!" struggling more faintly, "he comes to extort money!"

"No, my lord. I shall do, as he felt sure, I would, all that he can wish, freely and cheerfully. And so, sir, you now understand me. You remember I once told you how you could avoid—"

"Hold!" cried the marquis, putting forth his hand. "No more of that."

"Then you will allow this thing to go to trial?"

The marquis made an effort, succeeded in looking something like himself, and in bearing himself accordingly. Had he stopped after having regained his composure to reflect a moment, he would not have been quite so precipitate, but he had been betraying his weakness, he had allowed himself to be painfully moved, and he would now show that he had not lost all his pride, nor all his confidence in right and justice. He arose, and with a half-haughty inclination, he said:

"I shall leave the matter in the hands of my counsel, and you can proceed as you see fit. I can only say farther, I trust there may be no more occasion for consultation between you and myself."

The visitor understood the hint, and, with a polite bow, moved towards the door. Before turning the knob, however, he turned, and with a slight smile playing over his features, and in a tone which gave conclusive evidence that he spoke his true feeling, he said:

"As we may not meet again until this business is settled, you will allow me to inform you that your decision gives me no offence. I certainly admire your daughter, and I think I may truthfully say that I love her; but when I consider that in obtaining her hand I relinquish the high and noble honours which are now yours to bear, I do not find the sacrifice at all hard to make. I assure you, sir, I shall abide uncomplainingly by your decision."

With this the rival heir departed, and the marquis was left alone with his own reflections.

CHAPTER XIII.

FOR several days after his interview with the rival heir of Abbotswold, the marquis seemed more like a man in a dream than anything else. He moved around from place to place, his head bowed and his hands clasped behind him, seeking no intercourse with his fellows. And, in one respect he was in a dream. Not yet had he been able to make the claim of Agatha Callington's son seem real. That he could be hurled from the proud position he had occupied for so many years—he, the only marquis in that shire, hurled down by an illiterate boy—the child of a poor fisher-girl—it did not appear real. And like one who writhes under the torture of an incubus, knowing it to be a dream, and trying with all his power to rouse himself therefrom, so the marquis struggled to throw off the fearful load that oppressed him. But he was not to remain for ever in this dreamy state, as we shall see.

One day—the fifth from the visit of Albert Callington—the marquis received a letter from London, the seal of which bore a crest; and upon opening it and casting his eyes upon the signature, he found it to be from Sir Charles Stanwood.

"From Sir Charles," he muttered. "I wonder what he has to say—ha! by the way—"

And it flashed upon him that his rival had hired the baronet to conduct his case.

Then he turned to the beginning of the letter and read; as he did so, he began to tremble and turn pale; and when he had concluded, he sank back with a deep groan, completely overcome. The barrister informed him that he had consented to take in hand the claim of Albert Percy to the estates of Abbotswold, and he wrote not only that he might know whom his counsel would have to meet, but also to crave his lordship's pardon.

".... At first," he wrote, "I refused to have anything at all to do with the matter; but when it had been clearly shown to me that the claim was a just one, I had no excuse for refusing. If you should conclude to defend your possession, you can instruct your counsel that I have the case in hand, and that I shall be pleased to see him or them, at any time. Of course, it is not for me to give you advice. Though, personally, I am your very dear friend, yet, professionally, I am for the time prevented from giving you counsel. As the case is one which rests entirely upon simple facts, we shall proceed at once, and I trust that you will be ready to respond."

As soon as the marquis could control himself he sent for his agent, and having explained the matter to him fully, he bade him make immediate preparations for going to London.

"How long a time will you require?"

Mr. Drake replied that he could be ready in an hour.

"Then go immediately. Select the best horse in the stable, and change on the road as often as you please."

While the agent was getting ready, the marquis sat down and wrote a letter to a Mr. Henry Merrivale—one of the most successful barristers in England, and one whom he had often met while in college, Merrivale having at that time been a professor of legal jurisprudence in one of the law schools. Into Mr. Merrivale's hands he entrusted his case. He wrote a few of the chief points; informed him that Sir Charles Stanwood had been engaged on the other side, and advised that he should confer with Stanwood as soon as convenient. Farther instructions were given to Drake when he was ready to start; and, finally, the lawyer was to come down to Abbotswold as soon as he had done what was necessary to be done in London.

As Mr. Drake rode out from the park and entered the highway, he met a man on foot, dressed in the garb of a clergyman; and as he came close to him, he recognized him to be the same who had once called upon the marquis, for permission to preach in the church at the village; and this was the man, the agent knew, who was leagued with the Callingtons in the plot against the marquis. He would have ridden on without speaking, but the man hailed him, and he could not well refuse to stop.

"Mr. Drake, I believe?"

"That is my name, sir," replied the agent, very—and repellingly.

"Can I send a message to the marquis by you?"
"No, sir. I shall not probably see his lordship again for a week or more."

"Then I must call myself. In the trial which is likely to come off he will want counsel, and I have in mind a most excellent barrister whom I would like to recommend to him."

"If that be all you seek, sir, you need not trouble yourself. The marquis will select his own counsel."

"I thank you, sir. Good-day."

Without deigning to return the salutation the agent rode on.

The Rev. Peter Walsenburg having gained all the information he sought, pursued his way towards the cottage of Owen Callington. He had simply desired to know if the marquis intended to employ counsel, and stand up for his possessions. If the agent were to be gone a week or more, then, of course, he must be going to London; and, since the marquis was to find his own counsel, and Drake was his confidential man, it followed naturally enough that the latter was now going to engage the legal assistant.

Arrived at the cottage his reverence found Albert away at the village, and only the old man and his daughter within. Owen had promised, had solemnly sworn, that while this important business was in hand he would keep perfectly sober, and thus far he had kept his word.

Walsenburg sat down and chatted awhile, and at the first favourable opportunity he whispered to Owen that he should come out and join him after he had gone away.

"Albert is not in?" remarked Walsenburg, breaking a silence which had lasted several seconds.

"No," said Agatha. "He is at the village."

"When will he be back?"

His mother did not know.

"Then I'll not wait. It is nothing important. Another time will answer. I was passing, and I thought I would come in and speak with the lad, if he were at home."

And thus speaking, he arose and took his leave.

"There," cried Owen, a little while after he had gone, "I meant to have asked him if he'd heard from London yet."

"Why, he told us all about London," said Agatha. "Ay, lass, but not about the thing I want to know, not a word. But I can overhaul him."

Chuckling at what he flattered himself was an adroit piece of strategy, the old man caught up his hat and hurried out, and at a short distance from the cottage he found Walsenburg waiting for him.

"What is it, your reverence?"

"Owen Callington, it is something of fearful import."

Owen gaped in wonder, and the quivering and paling of his lip told that he was startled; for Walsenburg had spoken very solemnly.

"What is it, your reverence?"

"We have got Gertrude Harworth safe for the present," pursued Peter.

"Yes. As safe as she can be."

"But, Owen, have you thought what you will do with her after you all go to live in the castle?"

The old man stared at his interlocutor without answering. Walsenburg reflected a little while, and then added:

"There is one thing very certain; while that woman lives you are not safe."

Just as these words were spoken two men approached from the beach, and our friends moved up under cover of a clump of alders which grew by the wayside.

Now it so happened that a third party whom they had not seen, had been approaching at the same time in another direction; and as he saw them seek this cover, he took a fancy to crawl up and hear what was going on.

"Your reverence," resumed Owen, after the two men had passed, "you speak truly, I am afraid. We shall have to keep Gertrude Harworth shut up."

"Shut up!"

"Yes. If she isn't safe where she is, we'll move her somewhere else."

Peter shook his head.

"Peter Walsenburg," cried the fisherman, the light flashing upon him, and sending a thrill through his whole frame, "what do you mean? Do you mean that—that— Perhaps you mean that we must send the woman out of the country?"

"Where she would not be so safe as she is here," retorted Walsenburg, petulantly. "Suppose you send her to China; are not there cars there as well as here?"

"Out with it, Peter!"

"I see you understand me."

"Ay. You mean that she must be—be—killed!—murdered!"

"Call it so, if you please, my son."

"I have called it so," said the old man. "And

now," he added, stoutly, "I swear to you, I'll have nothing at all to do with any such work."

"Well, well, Owen, you can do as you like; only you had better think of this matter. Imagine what would be the result if Gertrude Harworth should get free."

"I don't believe she'd ever say a word," declared the old man. "I don't believe she'd ever open her lips on the subject."

"Ah, my son," said the man in black, "you had better not be too sure."

"Stay!" exclaimed Owen Callington, with a resolute look upon his swarthy face; "I swear to you, new for all time, that I'll never dip my hands in blood in that way. I'll never do a deliberate murder—no, not to save my life—never!"

"Ha!"

"Don't be alarmed. It's nobody that'll harm you," said Albert Callington, stepping out from behind the bushes. "Only," he added, with a slight laugh, "I advise you, the next time you have occasion to jump out of the frying-pan, look out that you don't jump into the fire. You escaped the two men on the beach, and fell under the eaves of another close at your back."

"Well, well," said Walsenburg, having recovered from his fright, "I am thankful I have gained the lesson at so slight a cost. And so you have heard what we have been saying?"

"Yes; and perhaps it is well that it is so. Let me know that that woman, of whom you have been speaking, can, by the breath of her mouth, destroy my prospects at Abbotswood—"

"As surely can she," interrupted Walsenburg, "as the frosts of autumn can blast the flowers of summer!"

"Then tell me how stands her knowledge in my way, and I'll exercise my own judgment. If I find it dangerous to me, I'll hush it. I have gone too far, and the stakes are too high, to relinquish the game now. Relinquish it! Relinquish the Marquisate of Abbotswood! By heaven! I think never before stood a youth like me with such a prize within his grasp. A peer of the realm! To stand one full step in the scale of precedence above an earl! Ye gods! and shall the life of one woman stand 'twixt me and all this? No, no—never! Tell me: what knowledge hath she that stands in my way?"

"Knowledge!" muttered Walsenburg, half to himself. "Ah, my son, it is her very self that stands between you and the peerage."

Albert started, with a sudden gasp, and caught Walsenburg by the arm. His thoughts had flashed back to that night, in the old church, two-and-twenty years before.

Strange works, surely, were done then and there. The bridegroom had been deceived. Another than the one he had engaged to do the work married him, and in the dim light he had not seen it. Might there not have been another than the one he thought standing by his side, as well as before him? How else could any woman stand in his way of Abbotswood?

"Peter?" he gasped between his clenched teeth, at the same time giving Walsenburg a grip upon the arm that made him scream with pain, "do you assure me that Gertrude Harworth stands in my way of possessing Abbotswood?"

"Albert, she does!"

"And who else?"

"What mean you?"

"Who else knows this?"

"Before heaven, my son, outside of your own home, only Gertrude Harworth and myself, of all that dwell upon the earth, can breathe a syllable to mar your prospects of the marquisate."

The young man let go the arm, and dropped his hands by his side.

He fully believed he had gained the secret of Gertrude Harworth's position with relation to the enormous stakes for which he was playing; and he had resolved that she should not mar his prospects if he could help it.

Slowly he raised his arms, and folded them upon his breast, like one who has staked his life upon the hazard of a die, and calmly, with a frozen calmness, said:

"Gertrude Harworth will not stand in my way many days!"

Mr. Drake had been gone eight days. On the ninth he returned, and with him came Mr. Merrivale, the barrister.

Henry Merrivale was a man nearly sixty years of age, tall and well-formed, with a commanding presence, and with one of those faces which at once attract and enchain the attention of the beholder. There are men who seem to be incarnations of electric force. If you meet them in the street you turn instinctively and gaze after them. Upon the platform of a spacious hall are a hundred men, and among

them sits one of those human electric batteries. Upon the ninety-and-nine you bestow not so much of a glance as would carry the features of either one of them over to another day, while upon the hundredth man you gaze in rapt attention. You cannot help it, for you are looking upon a great man.

Such a man was Henry Merrivale, and he had the reputation of being one of the clearest-headed and most able lawyers in the kingdom, and his judgment was seldom, if ever, at fault. His opinion was considered a final thing, and these who knew him well never ventured into a suit at law against it. The marquis knew well all this, and hence he had felt perfectly safe in placing his case entirely in his hands.

It seemed an age to the marquis the interim between Merrivale's arrival and the time when he could see him alone. He tried to read an opinion in the lawyer's face, but he might as well have sought it in the hat which he had left hanging in the hall.

But dinner was at length over. The light talk with the ladies had come to an end, and Merrivale said, with a smile:

"Now, my lord, I am at your service."

The marquis tried to gain comfort from that smile, but it did him no good. It was only a surface smile. It had no depth.

They reached the library; the lamps were lighted; the doors were closed; counsel and client faced each other, and now the marquis read his doom. He could not ask a question, and the barrister kindly relieved him from the necessity of trying.

"My lord, I have carefully examined all the evidence in your case, pro and con, and I have conferred freely with Stanwood. He and I, as you are perhaps aware, are like brothers in our professions, though often engaged, as in the present case, against each other. I'll tell you what I find the other party can prove beyond the possibility of a doubt. On the second day of September in the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty, the Right Honourable Albert Percy, eldest son of Lord John Percy, Marquis of Abbotswood, was married to Agatha, only child of Owen Callington, yeoman. Could you think of joining issue on that?"

"No, sir," said the marquis, with a melancholy inclination of the head.

"Then I have but two questions to ask farther. Is the woman now calling herself Agatha Callington the same Agatha who was married to Albert Percy?"

"Yes, sir, I know she is."

"And could you hope then to cast a doubt upon the paternity of this young man who claims to be the legal heir to Abbotswood?"

The marquis bowed his head and reflected. He could remember Agatha Callington in the bloom and beauty of past years, and he knew that she was a true-hearted, honest girl; and it was her very truth of love and trust in his brother that had brought the only stain that man had ever dared to breathe against her.

"Have you seen this youth?" he finally asked, looking up.

"I have," replied the barrister, with a slight smile.

"And you think he carries in his very face evidence of his mother's good faith with Albert Percy?"

"It is too plain to be mistaken, my lord; that is certain."

"And, furthermore," asked the marquis, "as in the case of the mother, so with the child; he has been under my eye since the date of his birth, and I should as soon think of doubting the relations which my wife and child sustain towards me, as to doubt the relations which exist between my dead brother and the people of whom we have spoken. I allude to the fact of the paternity only. The marriage I do not like to admit, because I knew that my brother never meant that it should be so."

"I have heard the whole story, my lord, and I have no doubt in my own mind that Albert Percy was imposed upon by Walsenburg; but when we remember how fearful an imposition he was thereby prevented from casting upon the woman who was to become the mother of his child, we shall not hope to gain a jury to our side. And, furthermore, my lord, I should dread to have you exposed to the necessity of hearing Sir Charles Stanwood address a jury upon that point of the case. I think it would well nigh break your heart—that is, if you hold the memory of your brother dear."

A long silence, and then the marquis said:

"Mr. Merrivale, you would not carry this farther?"

"My lord, I will be frank. If you cannot give me a ground for defence not yet presented, I must, for my own good name, drop the case. It would present but a simple farce in court."

"Heaven have mercy on my poor Isabel! Mercy, oh, heaven, for my child!"

(To be continued.)

LAST winter in the Polar Seas was the mildest known for twenty-five years; the natives of those seas lost all their winter supply of meat, which is usually preserved by being frozen. It is likely that the whalers, through the mildness of last winter, will be able to penetrate during this summer even farther than they did last year into the Polar Seas.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CHEAP ICE PITCHER.—The following is a simple method of keeping ice water for a long time in a common pitcher or jug. Place between two sheets of paper (newspaper will answer, thick brown is better,) a layer of cotton batting about half an inch in thickness, fasten the ends of paper and batting together, forming a circle, then sew or paste a crown over one end, making a box the shape of a stove-pipe hat minus the rim. Place this over an ordinary pitcher filled with ice-water, making it deep enough to rest on the table, so as to exclude the air, and the reader will be astonished at the length of time his ice will keep and the water remain cold after the ice is melted.

TO REMOVE THE TASTE OF NEW WOOD.—A new keg, churn, bucket, or other wooden vessel, will generally communicate a disagreeable taste to anything that is put into it. To prevent this inconvenience, first scald the vessel well with boiling water, letting the water remain in it until cold; then dissolve some pearl ash or soda in lukewarm water, adding a little lime to it, and wash the inside of the vessel well with this solution. Afterwards scald it well with plain hot water, and rinse it with cold water before you use it. The reason for this is the ready combination of resinous matters with alkalies to form compounds soluble in water. The resinous substances of wood, while new, cause a disagreeable taste and odour in substances kept in wooden vessels.

PRESERVATION OF OILCLOTHS.—Oilcloths are often damaged by the use of soap containing too much caustic alkali in cleansing their surfaces. All vegetable oils which are adapted for use in painting, absorb oxygen upon exposure to the air, and assume resinous characters. The drying properties of such oils are increased by heating them with litharge, which, by partially oxidizing them, renders their complete oxidation a work of less time than would otherwise be the case. Oils thus treated are called "boiled oils." In this state they are used as a vehicle for the various pigments used in painting and in the manufacture of oilcloths. Resinous substances resulting from the oxidation of vegetable oils are strongly acted upon by the caustic alkalies. It will be seen, then, that the use of soaps containing an excess of soda or potash would be liable to destroy surfaces of oilcloths. To preserve them properly they should be washed with Castile soap only, and occasionally receive a coat of good copal varnish.

GREASING WAGGONS.—But few people are aware that they do waggon and carriages more injury by greasing too plentifully than in any other way. A well-made wheel will endure common wear from ten to twenty-five years, if care is taken to use the right kind and proper amount of grease; but if this matter is not attended to, they will be used up in five or six years. Lard should never be used on a waggon, for it will penetrate the hub and work its way out around the tenons of the spokes, and spoil the wheel. Tallow is the best lubricator for wood axle-trees, and castor oil for iron. Just grease enough should be applied to the spindle of a waggon to give it a light coating; this is better than more, for the surplus put on will work out at the ends, and be forced by the shoulder-bands and nut-washers into the hub around the outside of the boxes. To oil an iron axle-tree, first wipe the spindle clean with a wet cloth with spirits of turpentine, and then apply a few drops of castor oil near the shoulder and end. One teaspoonful is sufficient for the whole.

SUGAR IN NEW SOUTH WALES.—Not long since the first parcel of colonial sugar, consisting of 120 bags and 34 casks of treacle, grown at Hastings, was submitted for competition in this colony. A portion of it made 34¢ per ton, and the remainder 33¢. This end has been effected by perseverance for some time, and it is hoped it will be continued, as there has been at last produced sugar from the cane, the produce of the soil of the colony, manufactured by colonial machinery.

VALENTINES AND THE POST-OFFICE.—The Postmaster-General, in a report upon the statistics of the Post-Office for 1887, mentions that the custom of sending valentines is, by no means on the decrease. On the contrary, the number rose from 997,900 in

1886 to 1,119,142 in 1887. Most of them are sent from London, and the number posted in the western district is larger than that in any other district of the capital, probably from the great number of country servants there congregated. A very large number of valentines, we should add, though the proportion is uncertain, are not printed love letters at all, but are intended for children, and are often very expensive. In Norfolk, thirty years ago, a child without valentines felt herself neglected, and to judge by the character of those sold the custom now extends to London.

BIG BEN.—The freaks of Big Ben in the clock tower at Westminster have given rise to a controversy between Messrs. Parkinson and Griesbach; but there is no promise of any satisfactory result. Big Ben is, it is said, a perfect chameleon in tone, singing out B in one place, E in another, D in a third, occasionally changing himself into the octaves below of these sounds—proving himself to be a very Will-o'-the-Wisp up and down the harmonic gamut. The question of resulting sounds, or, in other words, grave harmonics, stands independent of bells and harmoniums, and ought to be discussed in a true and scientific way. The experiment should follow the problem and its argumentation.

HOW I BECAME AN OLD MAID.

BECAUSE I couldn't help it, there! Do you suppose I wanted to be an old maid? Do you suppose I prefer gray cats, green tea, and knitting work to a good-looking husband? I'd like to know what you take me for!

I'm resigned now—at least so far as a woman can be expected to be resigned—but I wasn't always so. I was very nearly being engaged once, and once I was all but married; I'll tell you about it—in confidence, of course!

He was a fat, jovial, middle-aged widower with two daughters, and the handsomest whiskers I ever saw, and the delicious insinuating way he had of bending down his head close to mine and saying in a half whisper: "How do you do, Miss Hetty!" was beyond all description!

He didn't positively come to see me very often, but he was always stopping at our gate, (his farm adjoined ours,) and having nice little chats, and strolling home from singing school and weekly meetings with me.

One evening he dropped in about dusk. I heard him rubbing his boots on the doormat, as I sat at work in the hall window.

"Come in Dutton and have a pipe," says my father, as hospitable as could be.

"No, thank'ee," says he, "I've called to see Miss Hetty!"

"Oh," says my father, with a little chuckle, "that's it, hey? Well, you'll find her in the hall."

I worked away, making believe not to hear his step until he was close to me! And then I started, and cried, "Dear me!" and dropped my thimble, in the most natural way in the world.

"Don't be frightened, Miss Hetty," says Dutton. "I'll try not to be, sir," I answered.

"Now what do you suppose I'm going to say to you, my dear?" says he.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," says I, hanging down my head.

"I've been thinking, this long while, Miss Hetty, that you were fitted to adorn another sphere than that you so admirably occupy here!"

I didn't make any answer, but I eventually resolved that when we were married, I'd have a wing added to the south end of the Dutton house—the dining-room always was too small—and I'd have new crimson curtains, instead of the faded old green hangings, and that the old hemlock tree should be cut down, as quick as axe could level it.

All these ideas shot through my brain in less than a minute, while I sat and listened with my eyes intently fixed on the hem of my gingham dress.

"Do you suppose," he went on, "you could be induced to leave your home here, and your kind, indulgent father? I know it's asking a great deal of you, Miss Hetty."

"Yes," I faltered, "but—"

"But the little bird must leave the home nest some time," he said, laughingly, "and if you would accept the offer I have to make you—"

Little as I was experienced in such matters, I felt that the time was now come to speak.

"Can you doubt it?" I asked, trying hard to blush, but with a painful consciousness that all my tender emotions were concentrating, rosily, as usual, in the end of my nose.

"Then it is yes?"

"Of course it is yes," I said, archly.

"You are fond of children? My two girls will be among the claimants for your time and affection."

"They shall be daughters to me," I answered with enthusiasm.

"And what time could you—?"

"At any time that you please to name."

"Ahem—yes—the first week in September would, I suppose, be preferable."

"I will be ready then," I faltered.

"And I will ascertain the particulars, and let you know as early as possible. I told the trustees I thought you could be persuaded to accept the position."

"What trustees?"

"The trustees of the St. Genevieve Seminary. The position of which I speak, is that of English teacher."

I dropped my work-basket with a crash! Teacher in the St. Genevieve Seminary, when I had all the while supposed myself to be sought in marriage! Oh, my countrywomen, what a fall was here! And there sat Dutton, as complacent and smiling as ever!

"You see," he pursued the hateful topic, "I have a very special reason for wishing to send my daughters to boarding-school just now! I don't mind telling you, in confidence, my dear Miss Hetty, that I am contemplating a speedy marriage with Lucy Hooper!"

Lucy Hooper, indeed! a pink-faced little girl of eighteen, who knew no more about housekeeping than I did about verbs! Lucy Hooper!

"And," went on the absurd old widower, smirking like a lover of twenty-one, "I should like to feel that your improving influence was brought to bear upon my dear girls, for Malvina is a little inclined to be sullen, and Sarah Jane—"

"Yes, I know," I interrupted, with an impatient little toss of my head, "but I don't like teaching!"

"Don't like teaching! Why, I thought—"

"I can't help what you thought!" I interrupted, tartly. "I don't choose to accept the place!"

Dutton stared, with eyes like miniature full moons.

"My dear Miss Hetty—"

"I'm not your dear Miss Hetty!" I burst out, ready to cry with rage and vexation. "And I see no use in wasting any farther words on the matter. I won't teach in the St. Genevieve Seminary! And I dare say Miss Lucy Hooper is wondering why you don't come over there this fine evening!"

"Am I to understand—"

"You're to understand exactly what you please!" I exclaimed, beating a retreat with my work-basket.

"Good evening, Mr. Dutton."

And that was my first offer—or at least the first that I was near having. Lucy Hooper has married him now, and I hope she has a good time of it!

It was two years after that, when I was living in Madame Rocheparde's fashionable establishment—for I had got tired of the country, and wanted to enjoy a glimpse of fashionable life—that I became acquainted with Gustave Emile Dupin, the dearest, dark-eyed foreigner in the world, with a lisp, and a moustache like black silk.

"I me felicitate that mademoiselle has not yet her heart surrendered to other aspirants," he said, "for is it not that I may hope?"

I didn't know what to say—but Gustave caught my hand in both of his.

"The charming mademoiselle—why does she hesitate?" he ejaculated; "I am her slave—her faithful dog—the dust beneath her tiniest of tiny feet! Shall I my brains explode with the pistol?—for life without my Henriette's devotion were but a lengthened misery!"

"Gustave, how frightfully you talk," said I, beginning to be quite terrified.

"You will then be mine?"

"Yes," I faltered. What else could I say?

I was engaged this time; and how the widows and maidens of Madame Rocheparde's boarding-house did envy me, to be sure. The Countess Dupin—for Gustave had hinted at a title to which he was next heir.

How delightfully it would sound—and how I should enjoy sending my wedding-cards to Lucy Hooper—I mean to Mrs. Dutton!

The wedding was fixed for the next month. It was rather a precipitate arrangement, but Gustave told me, in his pretty chivalric phrase, that he could not exist without me any longer. And I really didn't see the necessity for any more delay; so I got the dress—white silk dress, and began upon the trousseau, with two seamstresses and a machine.

It was the day before the eventful Thursday, and I was busy packing my trunk, when Gustave came in with disheveled hair and cravat tied all on one side.

"Dear me, Gustave, what is the matter?"

"It is that your Gustave is wretched—that he seeks but to bid his Henriette adieu ere he himself annihilates. Weep not, my angel! but forget that thy poor Gustave has ever lived!"

And then, in answer to my eager questionings, he confessed that he had endorsed the note of a com-mer-

cial friend—that the friend had failed to meet his engagements, and that he consequently became liable.

"How much is it?" I asked.

"But a paltry hundred pounds—and to-morrow gold will flow in upon me in streams. My arrangements are all made; I shall receive remittances to-morrow. But for to-day—alas, my Henriette! why does not heaven strike me with thunderbolts? Why do I live?"

"I can lend you a hundred pounds, Gustave!"

"My guardian angel! my queen of love! It is but for one *lee-tel* day, and then your Gustave will heap the treasures of all his ancestors at your feet!"

I happened to have just a hundred pounds left, for my outfit had been more expensive than I had expected, and I gave it to him. He bent to kiss my hand—Dutton, in all his common-place courtship, never dreamed of kissing Lucy Hooper's hand! there wasn't the shadow of poetry in his nature!

"To-morrow," he murmured, "to-morrow! Ah, my Henriette! Until then I count the minutes—I number the seconds!"

And he went off, buoyant and *debonnaire* as a Chevalier Bayard.

The wedding morning came, but no bridegroom! the mystic hour—But still no Gustave!

I was beginning to grow hysterical, when finally Madame Rocheparde hurried in, with a note bearing my betrothed's delicate calligraphy.

"My poor mademoiselle, read that!" she cried, throwing it into my lap.

It was a communication from Gustave to Madame Rocheparde, to the effect that he had sailed for France on yesterday's steamer—that he was tired of England and the English, and sought in the more genial sunshine of his native shore a brighter career.

"As for the maid, old and ugly, to whom I was affianced," he wrote, "she has served my turn. I have spent her part of the hundred pounds to buy a passage! Did she for an instant dream that I, Gustave Emile Dupin, should squander myself on her! For her conceit and folly she is but rightly punished. Adieu, my good madame for ever, from your

"GUSTAVE."

That was the end of my only engagement! I never have had any more chances. I'm a settled old maid now, and likely to remain so; but, nevertheless, I consider myself a very ill-used person. All my contemporaries are married, but I am yet an unplucked rose—an ungarnered jewel! Somebody has lost a good wife—that's all I know. A. R.

FACETIE.

How much does a fool weigh generally?—A simpleton.

A CHAP out West says he cured palpitation of the heart by the application of another palpitating heart to the part affected.

A MAN complaining of a son stroke, was asked what he meant, as he looked in good health.

"Twin boys, by the favour of my wife," he answered.

The Boston Transcript says of a long list of the thieves of New York city, lately published in one of the papers of that city, that "the incompleteness of the list may be guessed when we say that not one member of the city government is on it."

"I SEE you are in black; are you in mourning for a friend?" was propounded by one friend to another in the street, the other day. "No, I am in mourning for my sins." "I never heard that you lost any," was the instant and keen reply.

A CHAP from the country, stopping at one of our hotels, sat down to dinner. Upon the bill of fare being handed to him by the waiter, he remarked that he "didn't care 'bout readin' now—he'd wait till after dinner."

A DISSIPATED and unmannerly nobleman, presuming upon his "nobility," once asked Sir Walter Scott, who sat opposite to him at a dinner, what the difference was between Scott and sot. "Just the breadth of the table," retorted Sir Walter.

It wasn't such a bad notion on the part of a glover who hung up in his glove-shop the following placard: "Ten thousand hands wanted immediately!" And underneath it was written in very small characters, "to buy my gloves—the best quality."

DOMESTIC.—The cry of the day is the crisis; that of the night is the baby. Never give an infant a knife, in case it should cut its teeth. If a child is troublesome, send it to a nursery-garden; if the nursery-maid cannot manage it, the nurseryman may. It is the father's duty to feed his children; remember that he is their pap-pa. It is vulgar to nod; if your wife "bobs" her head you needn't. Jars and broils should always be confined to jams and beefsteaks. If your wife asks for a shawl, give her

one, especially if she says that she shall have it. When the baby walks, give it a perambulator. If your wife dresses your dinner nicely, let her dress herself as well. It is only the brute that beats his wife; therefore never countenance a husband having recourse to a club. The best check for a milliner's bill is a cheque for the amount. Domestic felicity consists in unbounded faith in cold meat and pickles.

MATRIMONIAL PASTE.

"Really, my dear," said poor Mr. Jones to his "better half," "you have sadly disappointed me. I once considered you a jewel of a woman, but you've turned out only a bit of matrimonial paste."

"Then, my love," was the reply, "console yourself with the idea that paste is very adhesive, and will stick to you as long as you live."

AN insulting dandy, with a crooked nose, once asked a countryman what his brains were made of. "I don't know about my brains," replied the countryman, "but I know what your nose is made of."

"What?" asked the dandy. "It's made a-rye," (awry).

A THIRSTY Quaker, having stopped at a tavern to get a pot of beer, and observing that the measure was deficient, asked the landlord how many casks he drew in a month. "Ten," was the reply. "And wouldst thou not like to draw eleven, my friend?"

"Yes." "Then I'll tell thee how: *fill thy measures!*"

A LITTLE SERMON.

There was a clergyman who often became quite vexed at finding his little grandchildren in his study. One day, one of these children was standing by his mother's side, and she was speaking to him of heaven.

"Ma," said he, "I don't want to go to heaven!"

"Don't want to go to heaven, my son?"

"No, ma; I am sure I don't!"

"Why not, my son?"

"Why, grandpa will be there, won't he?"

"Why, yes, I hope he will."

"Well, just as soon as he sees us, he'll come scolding along, and say—'Whew! whew! what are those boys here for?' I don't want to go to heaven, if grandpa is going to be there!"

LOOKING AFTER THE MAIN CHANCE.—A young and beautiful but poor widow was looking after a rich old widower. Her friends wished to know what she wanted to marry him for. She replied, "For pure love. I love the ground (meaning farm, probably) on which he walks, and the very house in which he lives." There is platonic love for you!

A CITY, exquisite having become agriculturally ambitious, went in search of a farm, and finding one for sale, began to bargain for it. The seller mentioned, as one of the farm's recommendations, that it had a very cold spring on it. "Ah—aw," said the fop, "I won't take it then, for I've heard that a cold spring ruined the crops last year, and I don't want a place with such a drawback upon it."

KEEPING A SECRET.

The disbeliever in woman's ability to keep a secret would have repeated his error had he known Lucy F—, a brunette, whom everybody scolded for her odd and quizzical sayings, and everybody loved for her frankness.

One day she was walking with a friend, arm-in-arm, and was teasing her friend to tell her something which was not proper to be universally circulated. Her friend answered her:

"Tell you, Lucy? No; indeed, I shall do no such a thing—you never kept anything twenty-four hours in your life."

She flung her arms around her friend's neck in a very convincing manner, and exclaimed:

"Oh! Miss X—, I can keep a secret, indeed I can. There was Miss A— told me six months ago that she was engaged to be married, and I never told any one of it, and I never will."

A COUNTRY preacher was one sultry day much annoyed by those who dropped in after the service had commenced invariably closing the door after them. He bore the vexation with Job-like patience, but at length, being fairly exhausted from heat, he vociferated to an offender, "Friend, do for goodness' sake let that door be open. I believe if I was preaching in a bottle you would put the cork in."

The following dialogue took place recently. A curate of a London parish, after having with much pains explained the parable of the True Shepherd and the hireling, said:—"What is a hireling?" To which a precociously sharp ragged pupil replied, "Please, sir, you are a hireling; you're paid to teach us." It is not always that truth is pleasant from all lips.

AN old-fashioned clergyman, named Moore, was riding on horseback one stormy day, enveloped in a loose cloak of large proportions, and having a broad

scarlet collar. By the action of the wind the cloak was tossing about in all directions, when a gentleman rode up on a spirited charger, and the horse shied and almost threw the rider. "That cloak of yours would frighten the devil!" said the irate rider. "You don't say so!" replied Mr. Moore, "why, that's just my trade."

SKEWERING THE STARS.—A gentleman of the Temple received his laundress's bill made out in the style of spelling and handwriting peculiar to that class; but there was one item of 1s. 6d. which defied even his practised comprehension. It was for "skewering the stars." After wondering for some time how such a work could ever have been performed, and still more why it should have been executed particularly at his expense, the debtor sent for Mrs. Fearlash, when the reading turned out to be for "sewing the stars."

THE TEACHER AND THE OBJECT LESSON.

Heat expands bodies, little boy. I am reminded of the remark of a learned little boy. The late Prince Consort once paid a visit to a school, and heard the teacher make one of the classes go through what is termed, in the phraseology of pedagogues, an object lesson.

"Now, can you tell me anything about heat?" was one of the questions.

A bright little man held forth his hand, as much as to say that he could.

"Well now, boy," said the teacher, "what do you know?"

"Heat expands," said the boy, in the jerky style of delivery characteristic of his years. "Heat expands—cold contracts."

The teacher looked at the prince for approval; the prince bowed his head, and smiled approbation. The teacher, eager for more such smiles, went on:

"Very good," he said, "now give me an example."

"In summer the days are long; in winter the days are short."

A GOOD old story has just been raked up *apropos* of a recent duel. Two men—literary men, of course—quarrelled, and one of the seconds rushed off to Devisme's, and procured a case of duelling pistols. This pair was selected as the pair, Devisme being supposed to have previously loaded them. "One, two, three—at the third call Messieurs will fire," and Messieurs did fire, and the effect was droll. A little duck perched itself on the nose of one principal, and a wreath of roses entwined itself round the manly brow of the other. Devisme, or his boy, had by mistake lent the pistols of Robert Heudin, who was then the arch-conjuror of Paris.

A SORRY APOLOGY.

WE all know the story of the man who, being called on to apologise for saying someone was "a bigger fool than he looked," made the *apology* by saying that the gentleman was not a bigger fool than he looked. The *Daily Review*, an Edinburgh journal, has been doing something of the same kind. A little while since it inserted, under the "Deaths," the demise of Mr. W. W—, of R— Street, whereas Mr. W. W— was alive, and objected to be killed in print. So now we have the following old correction:—

"We regret to find that the announcement of the death of Mr. W. W—, of R— Street, is a malicious fabrication."

"You're dead, Mr. W.," says the *Review*.

"No, I'm not," says Mr. W.; "I am alive and well."

"I'm sorry to hear it," answers the amiable journal.—*Fun*.

A WINDFALL.—The Rev. F. Lowe, who created some excitement in fashionable circles a few years ago, by eloping with Lady Adelaide Vane-Tempest, has just been presented by Mr. Diarseli with one of the best livings in the gift of the crown. He will no doubt thoroughly realize the truth of the old saw—"It is an ill wind that blows no man any good." That can hardly be rightly described as a vain tempest which blew him a good living.—*Fun*.

UNDER A CLOUD.

A paragraph has been going the rounds to the effect that:—

"A thick cloud of white butterflies descended recently on Port Louis (Morbihan), from across the Bay of Gâvres. They were so numerous that they resembled a heavy fall of snow, and for some minutes the town and fields were quite white. A strong wind at last blew them into the roadstead, where they were drowned."

This is in every way an improvement on the conventional shower of frogs, and may serve as another illustration of the thread-bare saying, "They manage these things better in France."—*Fun*.

NOT SUCH A CALVES'-HEADED IDEA.—*Apropos* of the practice of slowly bleeding calves to death in

order to whiten the flesh—a custom which has been very properly denounced from the judicial bench as a most cruel one—we would hint to certain railway directors that the policy of slowly bleeding the pockets of travellers by an unjustifiable advance of fares is not likely to prove in the long run a paying one. John Bull's family are not quite such calves as to stand that sort of treatment.—*Punch*.

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF ONE AND THE SAME THING.

Young Mamma: "I trust you slept well, Mr. Mountfidget, and were not disturbed too early. Did you hear the dear children pattering overhead?"

Old Bachelor: "No, madam, I did not hear any 'Pattering.' What I heard was Pounding!"—*Punch*.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

Interesting paper. "Report of the Earthquake Committee." Rules for members. Each member is obliged to be present at an earthquake once a year at least. If not, on the fifth of November he must experience some equivalent in his own house. It is not necessary to be hurt very much. The members to be known as the Earthquakers.

Hints for a few other papers:

"On the Disappearance of Deposits in Recently-established Banks."

"Researches on Spectral Analysis of the Stars," delivered by a Ghost at midnight at the Shades; H-censed for spirits.

"Last Report on Drudging in the British Islands," by a Maid-of-all-work.

"On Sponges and Poor Relations," by Major Dives, of Bath.

"Flukes from the Indian Elephant considered as unfair in true Billiards with a Rhinoceros," by Professor Roberts.

Professor Rolleston, F.R.S., on *Chikkin Hazard, Desert Islands, and Fool Play*.

"Discovery of Human Remains at Virginia Water," with some notice of the Pic-Nic Societies.

"Ethnology and the Study of the Various Races," by a Member of the Jockey Club.—*Punch*.

NOT A "SILVER LINING" TO A "CLOUD."

Adolphus (graspingly; he is giving his future brother-in-law a little dinner down the river): "Waiter, you can—ah—leave us!"

Old Waiter: "Hem!—yessir—but—you'll pard'n me, sir—we've so many gents—don't wish to impute nothink, sir—but master—'fact is, sir—(evidently feels a delicacy about mentioning it)—we're—you see, sir—'sponsible for the plate, sir!"—*Punch*.

A NURSERY TALE.

Topographical.—Who would be the nearest relation to the Puss in Boots?—A Little Tiger in Tops.—*Punch*.

ESTHETICS.

Faddy (in agony; he's a martyr to the decorative art of the Nineteenth Century): "Oh! Mrs. Grabbit! I really must—implore you—to remove those chimney ornam—ugh!—those two—stiffling abominations—from this room while I remain here!"

[Of all the artists, Mrs. Grabbit said, as she'd ever let her apartments to, he was the most particular.]—*Punch*.

HOW TO MANAGE BACHELORS.—To mismanage them.—*Tomahawk*.

MOTTO FOR TOURISTS.—Too many cooks spoil the accommodation.—*Tomahawk*.

As one reads the manifestoes of certain would-be members of the next Parliament, in which they woo again the old love that they have somewhat sprighted during the last session, one cannot help thinking of the resemblance they bear to a husband who has offended his faithful helpmeet, and seeks to propitiate her with a dress.—*Tomahawk*.

DROOPING EARS OF ANIMALS.

DARWIN, in his treatise on animals and plants under domestication, says:

"Our domesticated quadrupeds are all descended, so far as is known, from species having erect ears; yet few kinds can be named, of which at least one race has not drooping ears. Cats in China, horses in parts of Russia, sheep in Italy and elsewhere, the guinea pig in Germany, goats and cattle in India, rabbits, pigs, and dogs in all civilized countries, have dependent ears. With wild animals, which constantly use their ears like funnels to catch every passing sound, and especially to ascertain the direction whence it comes, there is not, as Mr. Blythe has remarked, any species with drooping ears except the elephant. Hence the incapacity to erect the ears is certainly in some manner the result of domestication; and this incapacity has been attributed by various authors to disuse, for animals protected by man are not compelled habitually to use their ears. Colonel Hamilton Smith states that in ancient Egypt, with the exception of one Egyptian

instance, no sculpture of the early Grecian era produces representations of hounds with completely drooping ears; those with them half-pendulous are missing in the most ancient, and this character increases, by degrees, in the works of the Roman period. Godron has also remarked that 'the pigs of the ancient Egyptians had not their ears enlarged and pendent.' But it is remarkable that the drooping of the ears, though probably the effect of disuse, is not accompanied by any decrease in size; on the contrary, when we remember that animals so different as fancy rabbits, certain Indian breeds of the goat, our potted spaniels, bloodhounds, and other dogs, have enormously elongated ears, it would appear as if disuse actually caused an increase in length. With rabbits, the drooping of the much elongated ears has affected even the structure of the skull."

OLD-SCHOOL AND NEW.

ANGRY and swelling, fierce and fast,
Ran wide the waves of schism,
Estranging friends on either bank,
Blessed with a common chrisa.
At first, it ran a tiny rill;
Between two heads of clover;
At last, it ran an angry flood,
Dim eyes could scarce see over.
This side the Old School gravely walked,
And preened and prayed and pondered;
That side the New School talked and prayed,
As down the stream it wandered.

From either side the shout went up,
"Come over, friends, come hither!"
"The Lamp of Life shines on us both,
From yonder surging river."
Each earnest envoy trimmed his bark,
Each bore the anchor golden,
Forged by Westminster's prayerful ones,
In council grave and olden;
Each to the beacon gladly came,
For better light.

Lo! gleaming,
One torch burnt blue upon the waves,
One, ruddy rays sent streaming
Athwart the Doctrine Islands there,
Jagged and fearful lying,
Scoring the timid sailors back
To harbours safer flying.

At last an angel softly came,
Came with a simple story,
Bidding the pilgrims, either side,
Walk upward facing glory.

Then as they skyward took their way,
Still seeking wisdom higher,
The river seemed again a rill,
The banks each side drew nigher,
Till friendly faces looked across,
And parted hands clasped over,
The tiny fountain bubbling up
Between the heads of clover.

Then hand in hand the pilgrims went
Up to the gate of glory,
Old School and New told to the King
At last the self-same story.

E. L.

GEMS.

VIRTUOUS AND CLEAN.—Lord Shaftesbury says that he would be virtuous for his own sake, though nobody were to know it, as he would be clean for his own sake, and if nobody were to see him.

DISCONTENT.—Nobody is satisfied in this world. If a legacy is left to a man, he regrets that it is no larger. If he finds a sum of money, he searches the same lucky spot for more.

It is in sickness that we most feel the need of that sympathy which shows how much we are dependent one upon another for our comfort, and even necessities. Thus disease, opening our eyes to the realities of life, is an indirect blessing.

FLOWERS.—To plants we owe all the pure and ethereal sensations of smell—our finest essences, our most aromatic oils, our nard, cassia, and attar of roses. When the most enthusiastic poet-sings of the exquisite beauty of his mistress, he can only compare her to the lily. When we wish to adorn the young and blooming bride, we deck her with the rose, or with the more modest jasmine or myrtle. When we desire to soothe our bereavements by paying honour to the corpse of the departed friend, we strew flowers of appropriate memorial on the grave.

A TRAPEZIST KILLED.—M. de Bonnair, the great trapezist of Ba-la-Claire, and the rival of Leotard, has

been killed by a fall in the Madrid Theatre. Bonnair had a fortune of 1,000*l.* a-year, and followed his dangerous occupation from mere love of the art. His mother often entreated him to renounce the practice, but he always replied with a smile, "What matter whether one dies in this way or another?" He was only twenty-eight years of age.

STATISTICS.

DISTILLERS.—A return just issued shows that last year there were 80 distillers in England, 111 in Scotland, and 21 in Ireland. England produced 8,031,504 gallons of proof spirits, upon which duty was paid for home consumption. Scotland 7,229,819 gallons, and Ireland 6,404,354 gallons. In England the duty amounted to 4,515,755*l.*, in Scotland to 8,664,660*l.*, and in Ireland to 3,202,179*l.*

THE OYSTER SEASON.—The oyster season has commenced at Billingsgate. Natives realized 8*d.* per bushel; commons, 3*s.* to 4*s.* per bushel; and barrels were procurable at 8*s.* each. Notwithstanding the high prices, the demand exceeded the supply. From 12,000 to 15,000 barrels of oysters are annually brought from Arklow to Whitstable, and then transplanted in order to be eventually transformed into natives. At the Whitstable fisheries, where nearly 4,000 men find employment—at times earning 4*l.* per week—the aggregate sales of oysters exceed 200,000*l.* a-year.

RAILWAYS AND THE VALUE OF LAND.—The increased value given to land by railways is illustrated by Mr. Watkin, M.P., who, as chairman of the South-Eastern Company, states that at Hastings a piece of land for which, a few years ago, nobody would give 1,000*l.*, is now worth 30,000*l.*; that, at Redhill, a piece of land which the company bought for 36*l.* the acre, has been sold at 1,868*l.* the acre; and that a park (Brickley) near another station, and containing 700 acres, which fetched no more than 50,000*l.* a few years ago, has since been sold for 120,000*l.*, and could not now be had for less than 300,000*l.* In short, through these influences, land at first-class stations has risen in value from 200 to 1,000 per cent.

MISCELLANEOUS.

QUEEN VICTORIA has been the first English Sovereign to set foot in Switzerland.

In Switzerland 60,000 persons are employed in the manufacture of watches. They produce 1,200,000 watches annually.

THE statistics of cigar manufacture show that Great Britain and her colonies and the United States consume half the crop of the world, and that Cuba produces one-third of the whole supply of the world.

SALARIES OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF THE EMPIRE.—The following are the salaries of some of the principal officials of the Empire:—M. Vaillant, Minister of the Emperor's Household, 9,000*l.* per annum; M. Troplong, President of the Senate, 8,000*l.*; the Minister of War, 8,000*l.*; Marshal M. Mahon, 7,500*l.*; the Archbishop of Paris, over 7,000*l.*; and M. Rouher, the Chief Minister of State, 6,000*l.*

CURIOUS DISCOVERY.—A short time ago the servants of Mr. John Robertson, fisherman, Banavie, when cutting peats, came upon a calf's skin, made into the shape of a bag, and filled with what has the appearance of being Archangel tar. It must have lain where it was found from time immemorial, for the peat moss above it was just as solid as any other part of the moor, and it was fully three feet below the surface. Another of the same was found in the moss on the opposite side of the river Lochy four years ago, similarly embedded. For what purpose it was intended it is hard to say; but a guess has been hazarded that the tar was intended to have been dragged to the top of the hill, and used for the purposes of a beacon in days of old.

THE EMPRESS AND THE QUEEN.—Perhaps it may interest your lady readers to know that the Empress, in waiting on the Queen, was dressed with extraordinary splendour even for her; one of the most noted of the high-dressing women of Europe. The principal parts of her attire were a sky-blue gown and a newly-invented head-dress, of which the most remarkable feature was an aigrette. This aigrette, I read in one of the newspapers, "quivered with emotion." The Queen, on her part, was clad with extreme simplicity. Perhaps it would have been good taste in the Empress to have been less splendid; and, assuredly, seeing that the Queen was *incognito*, she might have abstained from having herself accompanied by a numerous suite, as she was, and from going as she did, in State carriages resplendent with gold.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. F.—*Imprimatur* literally means "let it be printed."
E. G. BOTE, Q. G. SIDNEY, and O.—Received with thanks.
ANNIE.—We should give us receive, cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation.

MISS MURRAY.—How inconsistent to ask us to give an opinion of a story, not having seen the manuscript.

R. RICKARDS.—We know nothing of the doctors you mention; take our advice, avoid quacks of every description.

ALBERT C.—You can only obtain admission to the corps by application to a recruiting-sergeant of the depot nearest to you.

JOSEPH C.—Declined with our best thanks; we do not believe in the quality of unpaid labour; every workman is worthy of his hire.

EMILY L.—The engaged finger for a lady is the fourth (or ring finger) of the right hand; that for a gentleman, the fore-finger of the left hand.

CONRAD.—In order to entitle a person to insure the life of another, he must be interested in the life in some way, and it must be with the consent of the other.

GEORGE.—Price-agent is a person appointed for the distribution of such shares of money as may become due to officers and soldiers after a battle, siege, or capture.

M. YATES.—Aliens are not eligible to vote for the election of Members of Parliament in England and Ireland, neither can they take their seat as members for any constituency.

MADAME SMOKE.—For general use, the following tooth-powder will be found very effective and agreeable: 1 an oz. of powdered bark, 4 oz. of myrrh, 1 drachm of camphor, and 1 oz. of prepared chalk.

G. S.—Brother-soldier is a term of affection, which is commonly used in the British service by one who serves under the same banners, and fights for the same cause, with another.

ELVIRA.—If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiencies. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour, nothing is ever attained without it.

QUEEN ANNE'S SHILLING.—There is no society bearing the title you mention. The meeting of the "Society of Antiquaries of London" (G. Knight Watson, M.A., F.S.A., being secretary), is held at Somerset House, Strand.

LAVINIA.—*Regina Domini*, means royal gift, and is an allowance granted by the sovereign to dissenting ministers in Ireland; it began in 1723; its acceptance has been censured by some nonconformists.

ARABELLA.—Precept and example, like the blades of a pair of scissors, are admirably adapted to their end when conjoined; separated, they lose the chief portion of their utility.

THOMAS.—Boarding-pike is a weapon formed of an iron spike fixed on an ash staff, used by sailors in boarding an enemy's ship; it is frequently called a half-pike, from its having a much shorter shaft than the whole pike.

FANNY.—The letter H should always be sounded except in the following words: heir, herb, honest, honest, hospital, hostler, hour, honour, and humble, and all their derivatives, such as humorously, derived from honour.

A SMOKE.—To colour a cigar-holder, smoke carefully, avoiding to heat it too much; a piece of wash leather fastened around it will accelerate the process; there is a method of producing a false colour, but it is very unsatisfactory, and no judge would be deceived thereby.

DON BERNARDO.—Providing you are prepared to "rough" it, as you state, you have a fair chance of doing well. All, or nearly all, languages are spoken, the population being composed of various countries—Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, and Americans.

HENRY.—Cavaliers was an appellation given to the supporters of the King during the civil war, from a number of gentlemen forming themselves into a body-guard in 1641. They were opposed to the Roundheads, or friends of the Parliament.

T. S.—Cauliflower, called the queen of vegetables, was first planted in these kingdoms about 1605; it came from Cyprus, but was not sold in the markets until 1670. In the 18th century cauliflowers were a common present from England to Portugal.

H. M.—Apply by letter to the Rev. Robert Robinson, London Missionary Society, Bloomfield Street, E.C. This gentleman will, without doubt, give you every advice. There is also a "Church Missionary Society," 15, Salisbury Square, E.C.

ISAAC.—Richmond, in Surrey, was anciently called Sheen, which in the Saxon tongue signifies resplendent. Here stood a palace in which Edward I. and II. resided, and

Edward III. died, 1377. Anna, Queen of Richard II. also died there. The palace was repaired by Henry V., who founded three religious houses near it. In 1497, it was destroyed by fire; but Henry VII. rebuilt it, and commanded that the village should be called Richmond, he having borne the title of Earl of Richmond (Yorkshire), before he obtained the crown; and he also died there in 1509. Queen Elizabeth was a prisoner in this palace for a short time during the reign of her sister; when she became Queen, it was one of her favourite places of residence, and here she died in 1603. It was afterwards the residence of Henry, Prince of Wales. The beautiful park and gardens were enclosed by Charles I. The Observatory was built by Sir W. Chambers, in 1769. In Richmond, Thomson "sang the Seasons and their change," and died there in 1749.

GERARD.—Special constables can only act within the jurisdiction of the justices who appoint them; but within such jurisdiction they have, when on duty, the same power as to arresting offenders, and preventing other constabulary duties, as police and parish constables have.

SPENCER.—Derricks are lofty, portable, crane-like structures, used on land and water for lifting enormous loads, and in some cases depositing them at an elevation. They are extensively used in the United States, and were introduced into England for raising sunken vessels by their inventor, A. D. Bishop, in 1857.

M. R.—*Dies Ira* (Day of Wrath), a Latin medieval hymn on the Day of Judgment, is ascribed to various authors, amongst others to Pope Gregory the Great, but it is generally considered to have been composed by Thomas of Celano, who died in 1255, and to have been used in the Roman service of the Mass before 1385.

W. H.—When rosamary is abundant, the following wash should be made and kept bottled; it not only cleanses the head from dandruff, but also strengthens the hair. Make, in a covered vessel, a strong infusion of rosamary, add to each quart of the infusion 3 oz. of borax; it may be applied with either a sponge or piece of flannel.

ROGER.—The greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution; who resists the sorest temptations from within and without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is the calmest in difficulties; and whose reliance on truth, virtue, and on God, is the most unflinching.

FOR ME ALONE.

It matters not that Beauty seal
The lips that greet me kindly;
Love looketh through the light of Love,
And ever loveth blindly.
I ask no other loveliness
Than that of Love's completeness—
But lips that I would press to mine
Must keep for me their sweetness!

Full rough and hard may be the hand,
And strong the arm that holds it.
And fair should be the life when such
The power that flits moulds it:
But, be it soft or hard, the hand
That brings a heart within it,
Must hold no other hand than mine—
Or never hope to win it!

For hands but work as wills the heart,
And lips but speak as teacheth;
And eyes but look where shines the light—
The light of Love's behestings:
So, whether weak with weary age,
Or strong with youth's expectancy—
For me alone must beat the heart
That wins my heart's acceptance! R. S.

C. C.—Recitative, a species of singing, differing but little from ordinary speaking, and used for narrative in operas, is said to have been first employed at Rome by "Emilio dei Cavalieri," who dispensed the claim of Renucci to the introduction of the Italian opera, 1600; it was soon afterwards adopted in other parts of Italy, and throughout Europe.

A. W.—Joe Miller, whose jests are proverbial wherever the English language is spoken, died at the age of 64, in the year 1748, and was buried in the old cemetery belonging to St. Clement Danes, in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, in a grave, the headstone of which was during many summers, until recently, regularly embowered and concealed by sunflowers.

JAMES.—1. Taxidermy is the art of preserving the skins of animals for cabinets, so as to represent their natural appearance. 2. For a work upon the subject, apply to Messrs. Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers, Hall Court, 3. The composition of your letter is of average merit, and your handwriting, although open to improvement, is fit for the office you mention.

EDWARD.—Boccaccio's *Decamerone* is a collection of a hundred stories, severely satirizing the clergy, said to have been related in ten days, during the plague of Florence, in 1348. At the sale of the Duke of Roxburgh's library, in 1813, a copy which had cost his father 100 guineas, was sold for 2,500l. to the Marquis of Blandford, after a spirited competition between him and Earl Spencer.

MIRIAM.—The planet called the *Georgium Sidus* was discovered by Herschel, and so named by him in honour of George III. It was for some time called, from its discoverer, "Herschel," but is now generally named Uranus. Its distance from us is ascertained to be 1800 millions of miles; pursuing his discoveries respecting this planet, Herschel ascertained it to be surrounded, like Saturn, with rings, and to have six satellites.

JOHN.—Homilies, derived from the Greek, were sermons or discourses in early Christian times delivered by the bishop or presbyter, in a homely manner, to the uneducated. The Book of Homilies drawn up by Archbishop Cranmer, in 1547, and another prepared by an order of Convocation, in 1563, were ordered to be read in those churches not furnished with a minister sufficiently learned to compose proper discourses, to prevent ungodly doctrine being taught.

SAMUEL.—Conference is a negotiation between members of the two Houses of Parliament, generally for the purpose of producing concurrence in cases where mutual consent is necessary. The Lords name the time and place for holding a conference, no matter which House may have demanded it. The particular views of each side are first written and supplied to the members of the conference, and if these fail to be convincing, a "free conference" may be held, which

gives an opportunity for viva voce persuasion. After one free conference none other but free conferences can be held concerning the same subject. At all conferences the Lords are seated and wear their hats, while the Commons stand uncovered.

NICHOLSON.—Double-tonguing is a peculiar mode of tongue employed by flautists, which produces a more brilliant and spirited effect, combined with a greater facility of articulation, than the ordinary method. Double-tonguing is effected by the action of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, this action being caused by articulating the word "tottle" very distinctly, at the same time accommodating such articulation with the corresponding notes.

J. PARKES.—The Clerk of the House is appointed by letters patent, and he sits at the upper end of the table with two assistants. His duty is to record the decisions of the House, that is, to make minutes of its votes, resolutions, addresses, orders, reports, divisions, and of all other proceedings, and to see that they are correctly printed and distributed to the members; he also reads aloud such documents as the House may order to be read, and performs the office of President until a Speaker is elected. The appointment of the clerks in the service of the House is vested in this officer.

A SHIPMASTER.—1. Providing your wife left your house without provocation on your part, she cannot legally compel you to maintain her, the more especially that you desire her to return to you. 2. The marriage was legal, without doubt. 3. If you marry again you will render yourself liable to a prosecution for bigamy, and justly so, since, from your own confession, you have no complaint to make against your wife. 4. Most assuredly you are liable for your wife's debts; under the circumstances you state, you should have advertised in the daily newspapers that you would not hold yourself liable for any debts your wife might contract.

GEORGE.—Custom entitles you to be considered the "lord and master" over your household; but you must not assume the dignity of master only; remember that generosity, forbearance, amiability and integrity are among the lovely attributes of man; a demure spirit, a fault-finding persistence, impatience of trifling delays, and the exhibition of passion at the slightest provocation, will add no laurel to your brow, impart no sweetness to home, and call forth no respect from those by whom you may be surrounded; it is one thing to be a master, another to be a man. The latter should be the husband's aspiration; for he who cannot govern himself is not qualified to govern others.

KATE D., eighteen, rather tall, brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, can play on the piano, and is a good singer. Respondent must be tall and dark.

HENRY NORTON, 5 ft. 2½ in., fair, light hair, good tempered, sociable, well educated, and a tradesman. Respondent must be good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated.

SALOPAT, twenty-three, tall, gentlemanly, respectfully connected, and partner in a manufacturing business. Respondent must be about twenty-one, pretty, ladylike, and educated, with an income of not less than 100l.

JOSEPH P. S., twenty-two, tall, dark, handsome, with an income of 80l., and just going into business. Respondent must be tall, ladylike, and accomplished, with an income not less than his own.

A LOVELY LAWYER'S CLERK, twenty-four, tall, light hair and mouth, respectable, and fond of home. Respondent must be about eighteen, affectionate, pretty, thoroughly domesticated, and also fond of home.

A. F. (Cheltenham), twenty-seven, a tradesman's daughter, medium height, dark brown hair, gray eyes. Respondent must be about thirty, respectable, affectionate, and fond of home, and in a good position.

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CADIZ, OPORTO, and LIGHT WINE ASSOCIATION (Limited).—Capital, 150,000l.—West-end Depot, 434, Strand. Sample bottles of the following WINES, direct from Vineyards: Dinner Sherry, 18s.; sample bottle, 1s. 8d. Household Port, 18s.; sample bottle, 1s. 8d. Club Sherry, 36s.; sample bottle, 3s. 2d. Club Port, 36s.; sample bottle, 3s. 2d.

POLONAISE MANTLE GRATIS.—GRAND Paris Winter Fashions, designed by the Paris Artists themselves, and full-sized cut-out Pattern of the Polonaise Mantle in LADIES' GAZETTE OF FASHION and MONITEUR DE PARIS for November, price 1s., post free 1s. 1d. Five Magnificent Plates, full of brilliant Novelties.—J. G. BERGER, 12, Newcastle Street, Strand, W.C.

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M. R. HARTY, Surgeon-Dentist, by a new Process REPLACES TEETH in the mouth without any pain or inconvenience to the patient. He is only to be consulted at his residence, 41, St. Martin's Lane, Trafalgar Square. Painless extraction if required. Moderate charges.

RIMMEL'S NEW PERFUME, CUPID'S TEARS, in a pretty moire-antique box, 5s. 6d.—F. RIMMEL, 96, Strand, 128, Regent Street, and 24, Cornhill, London. Just published, "Rimmel's Book of Perfume," with above 250 illustrations. Price 5s. Sent by post for 68 stamps.

BRANDY.—The Best and Cheapest in the World. COGNAC, 15s. per gallon; one dozen, 30s. Champagne, 18s. per gallon; one dozen, 36s. This splendid Brandy cannot be equalled. Best London Gin, full strength, 13s. per gallon; one dozen, 28s. The above prices per dozen include railway carriage.—G. PHILLIPS and CO., Distillers, Holborn Hill, London.

LIFE ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND.—Chairman in London—Sir WM. DUNBAR, of Mochrum, Bart., M.P.

While affording all the advantages and facilities usual with other Offices, this institution possesses special and attractive features peculiar to itself; and during the twenty-six years of its operations it has largely contributed to the extension of Life Assurance throughout the whole of Great Britain and Ireland.

The system and regulations have been framed, and from time to time improved, so as to secure to the policy-holders not only the utmost value for their payments, but especially the following:

As small present outlay as possible.

No Responsibility, whether of Partnership or Mutual Assurance.

No liability to Forfeiture, or so little that only gross carelessness can affect the policy.

A liberal return to the policy-holder, if he desire to relinquish his policy; or,

The loan of a sum nearly equal to its office value without cancelling the policy.

The eminent usefulness of the institution is apparent from its having paid policies on deceased lives amounting, during last year alone, to

NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS.

One whole Year's Ranking for Profits over all later entrants will be secured by Assuring before 5th April.

THOS. FRASER, Resident Secretary.
London (Chief Office), 20, King William Street, City; (West End Office), 48, Pall Mall, S.W.

CLERICAL, MEDICAL, and GENERAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY, 13, St. James's Square, London, S.W.—Established 1824.

FINANCIAL RESULTS OF THE SOCIETY'S OPERATIONS. The annual income exceeds ... £201,000

The Assurance Fund safely invested is over ... 1,416,000

The New Policies in the last year were 466, assuring ... 271,440

The Bonus added to Policies at the last division was ... 275,077

The total claims by death paid amount to 1,962,629

The following are among the distinctive features of the society:

Credit System.—On any policy for the whole of life, where the age does not exceed 60, one-half of the annual premiums during the first five years may remain on credit, and may either continue as a debt on the policy, or be paid off at any time.

Low Rates of Premium for Young Lives, with early participation in profits.

Endowment Assurances may be effected, without profits, by which the sum assured becomes payable on the attainment of a specified age, or at death, whichever event shall first happen.

Invalid Lives may be assured at rates proportional to the increased risk.

Prompt Settlement of Claims.—Claims paid thirty days after proof of death.

The Reversionary Bonus at the Quinquennial Division in 1862 averaged 48 per cent., and the Cash Bonus 28 per cent. on the premiums paid in the five years.

The next Division of Profits will take place in January, 1867, and persons who effect new policies before the end of June next will be entitled at that division to one year's additional share of profits over later entrants.

Tables of rates and forms of proposal can be obtained of any of the Society's agents, or of

GEORGE CUTCLIFFE, Actuary and Secretary, 13, St. James's Square, London, S.W.